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Current Gospel Questions

By

DR. JOHN A. WIDTSOE
of the Council of the Twelve

Course of Study for the Adult Department
of the Mutual Improvement Associations
1939-1940

With a

Departmental Preface of Special Events, Activities, and Features

Published by the
General Boards of the M. I. A.
of the Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter-day Saints
Salt Lake City, Utah
1939

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Calendar for 1939-1940

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"	14—Unchanging Fundamentals
"	21—The Unity of the Universe
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December	5—Current Events—Projects—"Alcohol Talks to Youth." See page 10 in this Manual.
"	12—Eternal Increase
"	19—God is Always Victorious
January	2—Current Events—The Tolerant Spirit
"	9—The Reign of Law
"	16—The Acceptance of All Truth
"	23—Does the Church now receive Revelation as it did in the days of Joseph Smith?
"	30—No Assembly Program or Departments—Opera
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"	13—Does the Payment of Tithing Cause Economic Distress?
"	20—Three Gospel Questions
"	27—Where are the Lost Tribes of Israel?
March	5—Adult Department Stake Social
"	12—What are the facts concerning the Adam-God Myth so frequently mentioned by enemies of the Church?
"	19—How do you account for Gospel resemblances in non-Christian religions?
"	26—What is the Attitude of the Church towards Science?
April	2—Current Events—Is it Wrong to Doubt?
"	9—How Old is the Earth?
"	16—How did the Earth come into being?
"	23—What is the Origin of Life on Earth?
"	30—Ward Theme Festival and Honor Night
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The Adult Theme-Project

1939-1940

PROJECT: "We will safeguard the environment of our youth."

1. By seeking to know the laws affecting the sale and use of liquor and tobacco.
2. By aiding in the enforcement of these laws.

By applying the project particularly to these problems, the Adult Department is in full sympathy and accord with the Church anti-liquor and anti-tobacco project, which was stressed in the April General Conference of the Church. This project, too, conforms to the spirit of the general M. I. A. theme for 1939-40.

Matthew 22:37-40.

"Jesus said unto him, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself.' "

In applying this theme we should keep in mind that the Lord also said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

Undoubtedly our first responsibility is to protect and promote the welfare of our youth. We, therefore, wish to emphasize this vital project, not only for thoughtful consideration but especially for general active and sincere participation.

The results of this important Adult activity will depend on the enthusiastic, intelligent, cooperative, and unselfish service of every one of our members.

Seek to create in youth a desire for a mastery in the art of living, through wholesome environment, self-effort, self-determination, and self-discipline. Stimulate the development of good habits, fine skills, outstanding personalities and character. This theme-project fills many crying needs and serves many worthy purposes.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Our department is to a great extent, a social enterprise and much depends upon the interest created and the good fellowship fostered. The most successful groups usually, are those who elect class officers and committees to carry forward the work and divide the responsibility with the group. This organization should consist of a president, vice president and secretary who should hold office the entire year and be elected by the Adult group. Special committees should be appointed to supervise:

Membership and attendance
Current events
Projects
Socials.

Appoint these committees early in the year that ample time may be given for the preparation of the work.

Two nights during the year are left open for social events.

November 7th—A review of the reading course book will be given, to be followed by a social. This may take form as desired. The following are suggested:

Travelogue
Social Games
Dance
Hobbies—or a presentation of original writings and poems by members of the group.
Banquet
Short Stories
Biography
Stories of Operas
Debates
Current Events

March 5th—This full evening is reserved for a Stake Adult Social. The following have proved very successful in some stakes:

Musicale
Program and Dance
Banquet
Lecture and Social
Grand Ball

Adult Reading Course Book

"THE REDISCOVERY OF MAN"

By Henry C. Link

Macmillan Company—New York, 1938.
251 pages, $1.75.

This review of the book appeared in the pages of **The Improvement Era:**

"Those who have read the author's RETURN TO RELIGION will be doubly interested in reading his latest book, THE REDISCOVERY OF MAN, in which he advises us to learn what man is and what he can be. In this book, as in his previous one, the author emphasizes the place which the example of Christ and the following of Christianity can have in the building of the complete and the happy life. The impetus which he gives to the well-balanced life should modify the lives of many thousands of people.—M. C. J."

It is earnestly hoped that every Latter-day Saint family will increase its thoughtful reading, and that this thoroughly worthwhile book will be read by each member of the group. In some places a few copies are successfully circulated throughout the entire group. In other places, each individual prefers to procure his own copy. But the important thing is—let's improve our reading—and include this book in this year's reading program. It will stimulate your thinking as few other books have done!

THE CAMPAIGN FOR PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND SPIRITUAL HEALTH

To assist in promoting the campaign against the use of liquor and tobacco, being carried on under the direction of the Authorities of the Church, the General Boards of M. I. A. have for the past two years recommended that the various departments set aside two evenings in their calendar for consideration of these subjects. Texts have been provided especially for these discussions.

This year it is again urged that attention be given to these important topics: the dates designated for the Adult Department are: discussion on liquor, December 5, 1939; discussion on tobacco, February 6, 1940. The texts are the pamphlets prepared by the General Campaign Committee—"Alcohol Talks To Youth," "Nicotine on the Air," "The Word of Wisdom in Practical Terms." These have been sent to all stake presidents who in turn have distributed them to all bishops for placement in L. D. S. families. Copies should now be found in every home.

Members of Adult Departments, therefore, should all be supplied with texts for the two lessons.

For effective discussions the following suggestions are offered:

1. All members read the pamphlet or pamphlets before coming to Mutual on the evenings designated —"Alcohol Talks To Youth" for December 5, 1939, "Nicotine on the Air" for February 6, 1940.
2. Various members (assigned previously) review given chapters or topics.
3. General discussion, conducted by department leader or Panel discussion followed by general comments.
4. Read all or parts of Section 89, Doctrine and Covenants, emphasizing especially the fact that the Lord has said, "Tobacco is not good for man."
   and
   "Inasmuch as any man drinketh wine or strong drink among you, behold it is not good, neither meet in the sight of your Father."
5. As a project, resolve to get others to read these

books and also to persuade someone who now uses tobacco or liquor to cease doing so.

These books are intensely interesting and will appeal to all.

If any have not yet secured them, they should apply to their Bishops and if more copies are needed, new orders may be sent in to the General Committee, Church Office Building, either through the Bishop of the ward, or preferably through the Stake Committee on the Non-use of Alcohol and Tobacco.

"Alcohol Talks to Youth"—10c per copy; "Nicotine on the Air" and "Word of Wisdom in Practical Terms"—free of charge.

Current Gospel Questions

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PREFATORY NOTE

This study course of twenty-five lessons falls into three divisions

1. The Articles of Faith—14 lessons
2. Some Current Gospel Questions—6 lessons
3. The Gospel and Science—5 lessons.

The emphasis to be placed on each division will depend on the time at the disposal of the class. Following the calendar will provide one lesson for each available discussion period throughout the M. I. A. season, although some chapters are necessarily longer than others.

The teacher is under the responsibility of presenting and reviewing the lesson. Free discussion of the subject matter should be sought but wisely guided by the group leader. Let the group do as much as possible of the evening's work, as long as the theme of the session is not forgotten.

The questions and projects at the end of each chapter are intended to foster discussion of supplementary thoughts awakened by the presentation of the theme. They are not a review of the lesson; but properly used may lead to much helpful interchange of ideas.

The group leader must decide on the evening's program, and it is his obligation to guide the group so that the plan is realized. He is captain of the group; he should have the chart, the compass and the rudder at his command.

And, don't waste time on mysteries.

The text of this study course will be recognized as having been drawn from articles that have appeared in the *Improvement Era,* most of which originally came from readers, as current Gospel questions.

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I

The Articles of Faith

ARTICLES OF FAITH

Of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

1. We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

2. We believe that men will be punished for their own sins and not for Adam's transgression.

3. We believe that through the atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

4. We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: First, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of Hands for the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

5. We believe that a man must be called of God, by "prophecy, and by the laying on of hands," by those who are in authority to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.

6. We believe in the same organization that existed in the primitive church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc.

7. We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, etc.

8. We believe the Bible to be the word of God, as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

9. We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

10. We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes. That Zion will be built upon this [the American] continent. That Christ will reign personally upon the earth, and that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.

11. We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where or what they may.

12. We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers and magistrates, in obeying, honoring and sustaining the law.

13. We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul: "We believe all things, we hope all things," we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.—*Joseph Smith.*

CHAPTER 1

WE BELIEVE

JOHN WENTWORTH, friend of Joseph Smith and editor of the *Chicago Democrat,* asked the Prophet in 1842 for a brief statement of the history and doctrine of the "Mormon" Church. In prompt reply the Prophet sent on an excellent historical summary of the origin and rise of the Church, followed by thirteen concise statements of doctrine, now known as the Articles of Faith. Neither the story nor the statements of doctrine made any pretense to completeness; they were but sketches designed for readers unfamiliar with the restoration and nature of the Gospel. Yet, in the articles of faith, prepared to present only fundamental doctrine, lie imbedded every vital Gospel principle of human action.

Two words, "We believe," introduce each, save one, of the articles of faith. These are words which in all ages have made human history. As men have believed, they have lived, labored, built, battled and died. When men's beliefs have been true, peace and prosperity have entered the world; when false, darkness, hate and chaos have ruled. "As a man thinketh, so is he;" but as a man believes, so does he. The potency of life lies in our beliefs.

There follows from such supremacy of belief the imperative need of measuring and weighing, trying and testing our every belief, so that the false may be rejected and the true retained. Belief is a two-edged sword. Much of life's endeavor must be to sift truth from error. In this confused world, our failures may often, indeed usually, be ascribed to our unwillingness to test the truth of our beliefs. The Articles of Faith are as a challenge to the world. They seem to say, "These are the beliefs of a great people, touching the issues of human life. Examine them. If you find them true, accept them."

There is no progress, no action, without belief. He who believes nothing is as one who sleeps, an oyster in a closed shell. He makes no impression upon the moving world in which he is placed, and humanity would be as well

off without him. Men must believe, if only to be brought into action. They who declare themselves without beliefs —agnostics, unbelievers and others—are usually self deceivers who do not know that they believe. Suspended judgment is of course permissible, desirable; but it must be attached to an active search for belief, else such judgment in suspense is but the easy covering of a coward. The world has suffered these many centuries from men who would not know or believe. To admit that one does not now know certain things, or has an honest doubt for lack of knowledge, is manly enough, but to build a philosophy of life upon such unbelief is childish; for ignorance and doubt always flee before the valiant searcher. It is one of the first duties of intelligent man to establish beliefs concerning the phenomena about him. To refuse to attempt seriously to resolve doubts or to establish beliefs, concerning vital matters is a mark of weakness.

Latter-day Saints believe. Therein lies their strength. They seek truth actively and try to build their lives with and upon correct beliefs. Their beliefs are used in meeting daily human needs; their ignorance they seek to diminish by seeking after more knowledge, increasing beliefs. Unbelief, agnosticism, lasting doubt, can have no place in a system which places eternal progress as the fundamental law of human action. Under this law one must forever enlarge and amplify his established beliefs. In this eternal quest, truth must be cherished and error laid aside. Latter-day Saints glory in their well-earned right to declare, "We believe."

The word "believe" is used in the articles of faith in an expository sense, to explain the substance of "Mormon" doctrine. In ordinary Latter-day Saint usage the word has a larger meaning—a conviction of the truth of a statement made. Indeed, the Prophet could have said truthfully at the beginning of each statement, "We know." Knowledge, properly tested, is changed to belief. Belief, put to the test of prayer and human use, in turn becomes faith, which is the higher, perfected knowledge. Joseph Smith's statements to John Wentworth are articles of *faith,* not merely of *belief*. They represent the settled convictions, tried, tested, defensible, of the "Mormon" people. In that

sense do Latter-day Saints read the words "We believe."

Joseph Smith presented the doctrine of the restored Church to the world in the simple articles of faith. That is evidence enough of their intrinsic value. The "Articles" are the foundation stones of a great doctrinal structure and determine its extent and stability. The articles of faith, or any part of them, cannot be set aside in the building of the faith of a Latter-day Saint. This is doubly true, for every doctrine of the Gospel finds root and life in these basic statements of the Prophet. The applications of the articles of faith may be varied to meet individual needs and conditions, but the worth of the truths contained can never be questioned nor the use of them laid aside.

Herein lies the definition of "Mormon "orthodoxy—a word naturally not popular among Latter-day Saints who make the declaration "We believe" upon the basis of individual search and conviction. Intelligent conformity may be labeled orthodoxy. A man should not be spoken of as orthodox when he uses a telescope to see the stars, or a microscope to reveal bacteria, or the articles of faith to guide his conduct; he is then merely using established knowledge properly for his benefit. The orthodox man is too often the one who follows the beaten path without knowing definitely and for himself whether it is really the true or better way. However, let sleepy definitions lie! The "orthodox" Latter-day Saint accepts as a matter of personally tested truth the fundamental doctrines of the Church, set forth for example in the articles of faith, and uses them in his daily life. Indeed, a member of the Church cannot be counted fully a Latter-day Saint unless he does accept the fundamental faith and practise of the Church, or at least on such basis of faith as he may have, seeks eagerly to develop such belief. Those who have real faith in the fundamentals of the Church cannot quibble about the essentials of Gospel doctrine, or attempt to classify Gospel principles in order of importance. The Gospel, a divine institution upon which the restored Church rests, is a unit in which each principle has its structural, organic place. Therefore, in the end, all principles of the Gospel are of equal importance. Really, there is no such a thing as Mormon orthodoxy. A member of the Church either

has faith in the Gospel, is on the way to that faith, or has no faith in it.

Latter-day Saints have reason to rejoice that they have a certain, though testable, doctrinal platform on which to base their faith and works. Since the organization of the Church no fundamental doctrine has been changed, none will be changed, for each one has its own necessary place and value in the eternal Gospel plan. Adaptations there may be to meet the arising issues of the stream of time; new revelations may come to amplify those now possessed; but changes in the sense of the obliteration of existing basic doctrine will never be made. The certainty, security, and unchangeability with respect of Gospel doctrine come, it need hardly be said, from the divine origin of the Gospel and its body of doctrine. That is well developed in the articles themselves.

There is no security in life, in industry, science, government or religion without such unchanging fundamentals. Therein lies the message of the articles of faith.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **Why does a man's belief determine his actions?**
2. **To what extent has human history been shaped by men's beliefs? Illustrate.**
3. **In what manner does action reveal belief?**
4. **How are knowledge and belief related to faith?**
5. **What is the difference between obedience and conformity?**

CHAPTER 2

THE FOUNDATION OF THE GOSPEL

(Read the First Article of Faith)

BELIEF in the existence of a supreme, creative, directing Being, God, from whom issue the life and phenomena of the universe, is the foundation of faith in the Gospel restored by the Prophet Joseph Smith. Indeed, the first event in the latter-day restoration of the Gospel—the appearance to Joseph Smith of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ—was a witness to the reality of these personages. Interest in the Gospel may be awakened in various ways, by temple work, the Word of Wisdom, social life within the Church, or the philosophy of the plan of salvation, but the truth of the Gospel can be known only through the certain knowledge of God's existence and a reasonable understanding of His nature. Upon the ocean of unbelief or of incorrect knowledge of God, many a soul has been stormswept and shipwrecked.

The evidences for the existence of God are so many and powerful that belief in a Supreme Being has always been well-nigh universal. Small groups, great in their own conceit, or blinded by false teachings, have at times declared themselves unbelievers in God's existence; but such atheists, usually quibblers over words and definitions, have harbored in their hearts the realization of the existence of an intelligent overruling Power. Voltaire, who with consummate skill of logic and rhetoric flaunted the existence of the Lord, crept back in his old age to his estate and built there a church dedicated to the unknown God. He is a true type of the atheist. Such fearing fumblings for the truth have recurred in all ages. They tie as a rule into scientific theories and mechanical human welfare, as for example the so-called Humanism of our day, with no provision for supplying the deep spiritual needs of man. They are ever on uncertain, changing ground, requiring manifesto after manifesto of varying opinion.

Deeply bedded in the very nature of man is the feeling that there is a great Power, a Being from whom he has come and under whose guidance he "lives and moves and

has his being." So universal is this feeling, so insistent and continuous, that it compels men to believe in the reality of God. With his ears man may sense the universe of sound, with his eyes explore the visible world, and with his feelings learn of the unseen world of living beings. We have been too much inclined to limit man's knowledge of the universe to the truths gathered by eyes and ears. The other gifts and senses of men must be recognized to be of equal power in penetrating the veil that hangs before the seeker after truth. The deep consciousness in all men of the existence of God is the first indisputable evidence for his reality.

The external universe likewise bears witness to the existence of God. The psalmist sang long ago, "The heavens declare the glory of God," and modern man, peering into space, filled with stars and electrons, has come to the same conclusion. The orderliness or "reign of law" under which nature operates must be the product of intelligence, for nowhere in our experience is order separate from intelligent direction. The man in Millersville was right: The seventeen parts of a meat chopper would never be assembled except under the direction of an intelligent mind, nor would the innumerable elements of earth and stars have been set upon courses of order except through an intelligent mind. The intelligence that maintains order in the universe is God. Similarly, natural phenomena are a series of causes and effects. As far as we know our every experience is the effect of some cause, often poorly understood. By that token every cause is itself an effect of some higher cause. Ultimately, then, there must be a first or ultimate cause of all things, a cause of causes, which is God. Nature in her every mood proclaims the existence and majesty of God.

It is true that within the memory of living men, the age of materialism reached its height. Drunken with an overwhelming accession of new knowledge, men dreamed of themselves as the masters of a mechanical universe reducible to the interaction of non-living matter and unintelligent force. In such a universe there was no need of God. Today the folly of materialism has crumbled before increasing knowledge. The sober student of nature now stands humbly, wishfully, before the mystery of existence; every new fact is to him the shadow of an eternal, intelli-

gent reality. The conception of the universe as a machine has collapsed. For example, Sir James Jeans, illustrious modern scientist, says:

"Thirty years ago, we thought, or assumed, that we were heading towards an ultimate reality of a mechanical kind. It (the universe) seemed to consist of a fortuitous jumble of atoms, which was destined to perform meaningless dances for a time under the action of blind purposeless forces, and then fall back to form a dead world. Into this wholly mechanical world, through the play of the same blind forces, life had stumbled by accident. . . . Today there is a wide measure of agreement, which on the physical side of science approaches almost to unanimity, that the stream of knowledge is heading towards a non-mechanical reality: the universe begins to look more like a great thought than a great machine. . . . If the universe is a universe of thought, then its creation must have been an act of thought." (The Mysterious Universe (1930), pp. 144, 148.)

Within the last few months an equally eminent scientist, Sir William Bragg, awed by the vast mystery of nature, bears similar testimony:

"We must think of the physical world around us as the footprints of something which exists in other dimensions as well, which has other qualities which are not physical and which no physical apparatus, however delicate, can measure." (Science, March 16, 1934.)

And within the last few weeks come the last words of Michael Pupin, scientist of world-wide service and fame:

"Wherever science has explored the universe, it has found it to be a manifestation of a coordinating principle which leads from chaos to cosmos. I choose to believe in this coordinating principle as a divine intelligence rather than that the cosmos is the result of haphazard happenings. We can place utmost faith in this divine intelligence. There is dependability, continuity everywhere present in the universe." (New York Times, March 14, 1935.)

Such statements implying an intelligent power in and behind universal phenomena from competent investigators and thinkers, which might be greatly multiplied, indicate the current of modern thought compelled by the vast discoveries of recent days.

Evidence of God's existence may be gained also from the experience and testimony of other men. The recorded history of mankind includes many accounts of the direct, personal revelation of God to man. Adam, the first man, walked and talked with God; Abraham, Moses, Elijah,

John the Baptist, Joseph Smith and others, have also testified to such manifestations. The lives of these witnesses were such as to make it improper for us to discredit their testimonies. We may not all visit China, yet we may learn of its existence, people and customs from those who have traveled in the Orient. We have not been at the North Pole, yet do not refuse to believe Admiral Peary's report. That which we ourselves have not seen or heard but have learned from others forms most of our knowledge. It would be unwise, indeed foolish, to reject such knowledge. We need only to examine such knowledge with care to assure ourselves of its genuineness. The historical evidence of revelation confirms the existence of God.

There is yet another method, personal, convincing, never-failing, which confirms all other evidences and leads to the certain knowledge that God lives. Whoever in absolute desire to know the truth places himself in harmony with divine forces and approaches God in humble prayer, with full surrender of inherited or acquired prejudices, will learn to his complete satisfaction that there is a God in Heaven, whose loving will is operative on earth. Just as the turning of the dial of the radio enables us to hear the messages of distant broadcasting stations, so we may tune ourselves in prayer for truth to hear the messages that come from heavenly places. Man is more than a machine; he can so purify himself, establish earnest desire, and forget his selfish needs, as to receive through prayer the final assurance of the existence of the Lord of Heaven and Earth. This method or test is within the reach of all, humble or great, rich or poor. Happy is the man who thus enters into the abundant knowledge of divine things.

The existence of God is made evident to man because, first, all men have an inner consciousness of a higher power; second, nature is orderly, betokening the operation of an intelligent master mind; third, every experience is the effect of a cause, itself an effect of a higher cause, leading to a great first cause—God; fourth, men have received personal revelations of God; and fifth, every man by prayer may know that God lives. It is doubtful if the truth of any other fact of human experience is or can be so well attested.

God, whose existence is proclaimed by every human

experience, is personal in his nature. Only confusion of thought follows the conception of the Supreme Ruler as a universal mind filling all space. He would be then nothing more than a force within the universe, to which personal, organized man could not intelligently, willingly, bend his knee. The rational mind demands that the Master of the Universe be a personal being, however infinite may be his attributes; and conceives for him the fitting form of man, the highest creature among living beings. Painters, sculptors and poets have of necessity pictured him in personal form to make him comprehensible to the human mind. The roaring sea, tempests, earthquakes, lightning and thunder have been but manifestations of his power. Those who have attempted to identify the Lord with the forces of nature have been as twin brothers of the materialists. The human mind finds understanding and the human heart finds living peace only in a God who is a person. Moreover, those to whom the Lord has revealed himself have unanimously testified that he is in personal form, like unto a man, but glorious beyond the powers of man to describe, in the words of Joseph Smith, "whose brightness and glory defy all description." Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the great vision in the Kirtland Temple attempted to describe what they saw. "We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us, and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold in color like amber. His eyes were as a flame of fire, the hair of his head was white like the pure snow, his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun, and his voice was as the rushing of great waters." (Doc. and Cov. 110:2, 3.) God is personal, and in form like unto man.

The personal nature of God does not in any manner limit the extent of his power. From the presence of the Lord issues an influence known as the Holy Spirit, filling all existence and all space. By means of the Holy Spirit God is present everywhere, and may know the needs of all men and communicate comfort and strength to them. By the agency of the Holy Spirit, all manifestations of the physical universe are made evident. All the operations of life and motion, of all existence, proceed from the Lord through the omnipresent Holy Spirit. This doctrine is

readily understood in our day when words broadcasted into space may everywhere be picked up by those possessing the right instrument, or when great aeroplanes in the air or ships on the sea may be directed in their motions by the far distant radio operator. Long before radio was born, the Lord. revealing this truth to the latter-day prophet, declared, the "light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space—the light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things." (Doc. and Cov. 88: 12, 13.)

God is also our Eternal Father. That is, he is more than a creator, an organizer of men. There is a kinship of family, descent, relationship between him and man. Indeed, man is the very child of God, begotten spiritually in the life before our earth existence. Man is therefore of a divine nature, in every power and attribute like unto his spiritual Father, though in an immeasurably smaller degree. Man is like God even in form, "And I, God, said unto mine Only Begotten, which was with me from the beginning, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and it was so." (Moses 2:26.) The Father, concerned with the welfare of his children, has placed them on earth for further education and preparation for their progressive, high destiny. The relation between God and man, that of actual father and son, explains the deep mystery of human existence. When we pray to God we do not approach a distant, strange Being, but we speak out of our hearts to our Father, of whose very substance we are. We do not plead with him as subject to ruler, as slave to master, but as child to parent, for such indeed are all men in their relationship to God.

There is no greater necessity in human life than a knowledge of the existence of God and a correct understanding of his plan for the salvation of mankind. It is the beginning of wisdom. Every intelligent man may win such certain knowledge for himself by following a simple formula, divinely ordained: First, he must fervently desire such

knowledge, with a desire that burns into the soul. Then he must earnestly pray to God for help, nothing doubting, that is, he must place himself in full harmony with the forces he desires to know. At the same time he must learn by study that which already has been revealed concerning God, so that his mind may support him in his search. Lastly, he must try with all his might to live and practice the precepts of God, his actions must support his desire. If a man do this he cannot fail to find God and his truth. Such search is always greatly rewarded.

A fine, highly trained lover of truth once said in a hurried moment: "In science, every experience of one worker may be repeated by another to prove its truth. I cannot repeat Joseph Smith's first vision, therefore I find it difficult to accept it, for it seems at least unscientific." The conclusion was erroneous. The message received by Joseph Smith in the First Vision was that God is a real living Personage concerned with the welfare of the children of men. Any man who will seek with desire, prayer, study and practice, who will do as Joseph Smith did, will receive the same certain knowledge of God's existence. The Father and the Son may not appear in person to every seeker, but the message will be as convincing. A chemist may mix his chemicals in vessels of porcelain, gold or platinum, in dishes, round, square or oblong—the final reaction is the same and that is the vital matter. Without seeing God in person, but by the power that issues from him, one may know that he lives and that the latter-day restoration of the Gospel is divinely true. Every Latter-day Saint may and should have his own great vision of God to guide him through life.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **How do you know that there is a God?**
2. **How would you help a young person to discover the reality of our Father in Heaven?**
3. **When is a person in harmony with God?**
4. **Show that the doctrine of preexistence of man follows from the doctrine of the actual Fatherhood of God.**
5. **Which of the four steps that lead to certain knowledge is most important?**
6. **What was the most essential thing about the Great First Vision of Joseph Smith?**

CHAPTER 3

THE SUPREMACY OF THE WILL

(Read the Second Article of Faith)

THE story, meaning, and consequences of the so-called transgression of Adam, often known as "The Fall," can be read and understood only in terms of the origin and nature of man.

Man is eternal. That is, he has existed from the dim beginning, and he will continue to exist forever into the future. In the language of modern revelation, man was "in the beginning with God," and also, "he shall be from everlasting to everlasting." In short, he is an indestructible unit of the universe, whose immortality extends back into the past as forward into the future.

Such a view implies that man, as an intelligent being, lived before he came upon earth, that is, that he has a pre-existent history; and that life on earth must have a definite connection with pre-existent life. Indeed, pre-existence and the continuity of life, unbroken throughout the generations of time, are settled doctrines of the restored gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The pre-existence of man is really an old but forgotten doctrine. Jesus, the Christ, confirmed the belief to the open-eyed reader in the words of his exalted prayer, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." If one person, however great, may have had a pre-existent life, all the hosts of men may have lived before they came upon earth. Moreover, it baffles thought to believe that intelligent man, who is the increasing commander of universal forces, has but transient existence, while inanimate nature has persisted and will persist forever. It makes the servant greater than the master. Perversions of truth appear to have succeeded in eliminating pre-existence from most Christian philosophies of life.

Many thinkers of all ages have been led to accept the doctrines of pre-existence. For example, it appears again and again in the philosophy of Plato, four hundred years before Christ.

Poets have sung of it, as the poet Vaughan, in "The Retreat,"

> "Happy those early days, when I
> Shined in my angel infancy!
> Before I understood this place
> Appointed for my second race."

Or in the words of Traherne,

> "How like an angel came I down!
> How bright are all things here!
> When first among His works I did appear
> O how their glory me did crown!
> The world resembled his Eternity
> In which my soul did walk;
> And everything that I did see
> Did with me talk."

The lines from the later poet, Wordsworth, are better known,

> "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
> The soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar—
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home."

Poets of other nations have likewise sung of man's pre-existence.

Man was an intelligent being in the pre-existent life. He could gather knowledge, think, and act, as in this life. He possessed also that most fundamental of human qualities, a will, by which he could use his powers, accept or reject, move upward or downward. Then as now, true intelligence, a compound of knowledge and the proper use of knowledge, was conditioned by the will. By the righteous use of his will pre-existent man moved forward, throughout long ages of time. By the same use of his will he was lifted upward, along the path of progression. Perhaps it may be said that in the last analysis man and his will are synonymous.

The pre-existent beings did not use their wills alike.

Some, by the better use of their powers, progressed more rapidly than others. There was not a dead monotony among the hosts of heaven. The words of Abraham give a picture of pre-existent conditions.

"Now, the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; and God saw these souls that they were good, and He stood in the midst of them, and he said, These will I make my rulers; for He stood among those that were spirits and He saw that they were good; and He said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born."

God, the Father, moved in that pre-existent world among His spirit children. He led, taught, opened the view to progress, even as man on earth is guided by the Lord. The progress of an intelligent being is accelerated by the help of some one superior in knowledge and power, who knows the path and its problems. Such a teacher was the Father to pre-existent man. Plans and programs for advancement were no doubt formulated and presented by the Great Teacher to his children.

The time came when pre-existent, progressive man could profit by an earth-career and the experiences of temporal life. The plan for this purpose, formulated by the Father, was accepted by all who have been, are, or shall be upon earth. Only those who had fitted themselves by steady progression, a product of the will, were eligible for the earth-adventure. Only those who willingly, without compulsion, accepted the plan were permitted to come upon earth. This throws a clear light upon earth-life. Man has earned the right to come upon earth, and is here because he desired to come. He may well look the world in the face proudly and unflinchingly. He desired to come, and he had earned the right to come upon earth.

Someone had to come on earth, first. Among the assembled hosts, Adam and Eve were chosen. If Abraham were among "the noble and great ones" we may be sure that our First Parents stood with the greatest in that hopeful throng. They must have conquered their wills for mighty righteousness! It was a part of the plan of salvation (to be discussed in another article) that the eternal, deathless spirit of man should inhabit, on earth, a body

subject to disease and death. Adam and Eve undertook to begin the earth-program for the waiting spirits, and to subject their own eternal spirits to earth conditions. As a shadow only do we understand the details of the sacrifice thus made by Adam and Eve. They performed their mission gladly, for their wills were under control, and ready to obey the good plans of the Father for His children.

The so-called transgression of Adam was that he subjected his deathless spirit to the conditions of a body that must of necessity suffer death. But, this subjection was indispensable, if the waiting spirits should secure the desired experiences on earth, in harmony with the plan of the Lord. The breaking of the bonds with the spirit world was the "Sin of Adam." Sin in its larger meaning is the breaking of a law. In this instance, however, a lesser law was broken that a greater law might be fulfilled. This happens often in daily life. A beautiful crystal is broken and melted so that iron, copper, or silver which forms part of its composition may be obtained. To save another, many a person has rushed into a burning house, sometimes to his death. Through the "transgression" of Adam, all mankind has been placed upon the road of eternal progression, and thereby have been blessed. Our first parents who dared to endure the pain of initiating the eternal plan must be rated as the great hero and heroine of all time. The human race has descended from worthy parents. The obloquy which has been cast upon Adam and Eve has been unjust and prompted by ignorance of the Gospel plan.

Adam and Eve learned to understand that out of their act, whatever error on their part it involved, great good would come. Note the words of Moses:

> "And in that day Adam blessed God and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth saying: Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God. And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient."

This conception frees Adam and Eve from the charge that they by sin brought upon man the miseries of life.

Let it be remembered that every person who comes into the world from the pre-existent state, accepted the plan proposed by the Father, including the mission of Adam and Eve. Indeed, all men became parties in that sense to Adam's "transgression," and are in part as much to blame or to praise as Adam himself. He was our agent. There can be no serious talk, therefore, of being punished for Adam's transgression.

Besides, though Adam had sinned, his children should not be punished therefor. Such procedure would violate the love and justice of God. Since, even in man-made courts, the criminal is punished, not his children; how much larger would be the justice administered by a divine Judge! An attempt to punish the innocent for the crimes of the guilty is abhorrent, and belongs to evil or barbaric people and conditions. True it is, that one man's faults may injure others. That is too evident in our man-made society. But there is an eternity of difference between suffering for the mistakes of others and being punished for the sins of others.

The essence of God's law, as of man's, is that he who breaks the law must suffer the consequences of the violation committed. That is the fundamental principle of the plan of salvation. The plan has been laid out for all persons; its metes and bounds, its regulations and requirements, have been established. They who know and obey the plan rise toward salvation; they who know and disobey are left behind. In that sense man is engaged in the work of saving himself; the Father formulates the plan and places it within man's reach; man himself must accept or reject the plan. Salvation becomes a cooperative affair. The outcome depends upon man's will, as well as upon God's help.

To seek out law and to obey it when found is man's first and constant duty. They who obey the law find freedom; opposition to law results in bondage. Acceptance or rejection of law depends on the will of man. A fine and tempered will obeys; a weak and flabby will slinks away from duty. By the proper use of the will pre-existent man rose to the privilege of earth-life. By the use of their wills Adam and Eve were made able to fulfill their mission. By the power of the will every man may be lifted into a state of salvation. The training of the will from infancy to old

age, is and should be the chief business of life. True happiness is a product only of a will for righteousness. Upon his success in mastering his will a man's future will depend.

The word "punishment," used in the second Article of Faith, deserves consideration. When a law is broken, punishment follows, as effect follows cause in the ordinary experiences of life, natural or human. What is the punishment that follows the breaking of divine laws? Undoubtedly the slowing up of the rate of progression is the invariable result, but what particular form or degree does it take? The prophet, Joseph Smith, was concerned with this question, and inquiring from the Lord, he received a luminous answer: "Eternal punishment is God's punishment. Endless punishment is God's punishment." He who is eternal and endless will determine the punishment to be meted out for human transgressions, and His judgments will be tempered with mercy. Yet, the solemn, fearful fact remains: as we sow we shall reap; as we disobey the law, we shall be punished; eternally we must pay some price for our acts.

Man's responsibility for his acts is set forth by the Lord in words that thrill the soul:

"All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence, also, otherwise there is no intelligence. Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man, because that which was from the beginning is plainly manifest unto them, and they receive not the light."

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **What is your definition of "man".**
2. **How may our preexistent lives affect our careers on earth?**
3. **To what extent does ignorance of the law in spiritual matters affect the divine judgment pronounced upon man?**
4. **Under what conditions may a lesser law be broken to satisfy a higher law? Explain.**
5. **Enumerate some symptoms of a weak will.**
6. **How would you set about to strengthen the will?**

CHAPTER 4

THE PLAN FOUNDED IN LOVE

(Read the Third Article of Faith)

PURPOSE and plan penetrate and suffuse every Gospel principle and practice, even as the warp crosses and touches the woof. Humanity lives under law, not chance.

The unchanging purpose of the Almighty Father has been and is to secure the constant, progressive welfare of His children; and, throughout the ages, His plan has been fitted to His purpose. Such a purpose and plan, encompassing human existence, must have been framed in God's love for us, His children. There can be no other explanation of the concern of a glorified intelligence for mortal man. Indeed, the Lord has declared in ringing words, "This is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."

The story of the origin of the plan which governs man's life on earth is known in its large outlines. In the time that was, before earth's foundations were laid, the hosts of spirits, destined for the earth to be, gathered at the Father's request. In that great council there was explained and proposed for acceptance a plan for the further education of the spirit children of God. The plan required that the spirits descend from their heavenly abode to earth, and enter earthly bodies, subject to death. Contest with the stubborn elements of earth, toil and struggle, often sorrow and disease, were the experiences on which to strengthen and sharpen their wills. Courageously, they faced the issue and joyously accepted the divine proposal. Thus man secured the privilege of an earth experience. He had fitted himself for it; and was willing to accept it. All who come upon earth were in that great council and accepted the plan.

The first of the glorious throng to come to earth were Adam and Eve, who were to be the parents of the coming race. They partook of earthly things and made themselves and their posterity subject to earth-pains and death. That was part of the plan. However, since the permanent

winning of a body of earth materials, as an instrument for learning to know the material universe, was an essential feature of the plan, it was necessary to devise some method of recovering the body after death, to be thereafter an imperishable possession of man.

Jesus, the First-Born of the Father, was selected to perform the work required to cancel the effects of Adam's act, and to raise the bodies of humankind, purified, into eternal life, beyond further vicissitudes of mortal life. It was a heavy commission. Jesus was to pay the price of the mortal death of Adam and of every member of the human race. By the law of compensation, of paying an equal price, he must needs suffer the accumulated agony of all men. He has himself described the ordeal, "which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men." Only one high in the councils of heaven could endure such agony. It is therefore no wonder that the First-Born, the eldest in the family, possessed of greatest power, was so selected.

The love of the Father for His children led to the formulation of the plan of salvation. The greatness of of that love is evident in the placing of this soul-testing mission upon his beloved First-Born. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believed in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Likewise, it was the great love of Jesus for His Father, whose plan it was, and for His brothers and sisters, for whose benefit the plan was presented, that impelled Him to accept the appointment, gladly. Love directed His vast power into service for mankind. Love gives courage to suffer. Even so, love determines the actions of man to man. Love is the vitalizing force of life.

The atonement, from this point of view, becomes less the payment of a wrong committed, and more a necessary step in the consummation of a plan. In the larger sense, whenever we break a law to our hurt, we sin; but often we endure pain for a greater gain. The cataract on the

eye is cut, so that sight may be won. We subject ourselves to an operation to regain our health. Adam had incurred a debt for himself and his children; Jesus undertook to pay it. In all such cases the law of love is the impelling force acting upon him who gives help. In the case of Adam, love of God, shown through obedience, as well as desire for progress impelled him to come upon earth and perform his assigned mission.

All this is reasonable enough. If God lives and we are his children, He would naturally love us and plan for our welfare. If we need to experience life in a material universe, the necessity of a plan for earth-life is explained. Vicarious service is a daily affair in life. One man may cut off or restore the lighting or water system of a city of thousands; one man may rescue another who is drowning; a friend may pay the obligations incurred by a student who enters college. The comprehension of the atonement begins with belief in God, a recognition of man's relationship to his Eternal Father and an understanding of the plan of salvation. To begin anywhere else is to invite confusion and doubt. Christians who find it difficult to understand the atonement have not begun their study correctly. True it is that the exact means, methods, or procedure by which Jesus performed his work are not known to us, and probably could not be understood by the finite human mind. The same may be said, however, concerning the essential truth of every human concern. There is mystery to finite man in the ultimate relationships within every science and art. "What is truth?" in its deepest meaning remains the unanswered question.

Man may be certain of one thing. Through the atonement of Christ, he shall recover his body, and possess it throughout eternal life. It is the Christian's sure belief. Paul, the apostle, set forth clearly the effect of Christ's sacrifice:

> What is sown is mortal
> What rises is immortal
> Sown inglorious it rises in glory.
> Sown in weakness, it rises in power;
> Sown an animate body, it rises a spiritual body.
> As there is an animate body so there is a spiritual body—

For this perishing body must be invested with the imperishable,
And this mortal body invested with immortality.
. . . . .
Death is swallowed up in victory.
O Death, where is thy victory,
O Death, where is thy sting.

Exceeding joy enters the hearts of men, when the meaning of Christ's sacrifice is comprehended. In the words of Gilbert:

Jesus lives! Thy terrors now
Can, O Death, no more appall us;
Jesus lives! By this we know
Thou, O Grave, canst not enthrall us.
Hallelujah.
Jesus lives! Henceforth is death
But the gate to life immortal;
This shall calm our trembling breath
When we pass its gloomy portal.
Hallelujah.

The service of Jesus does not stop with the atonement by which the resurrection from the grave of the body of man will be accomplished. He had yet other duties. "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved." His position as man's Redeemer makes Him the central figure in the plan of salvation. His appointment included the full supervision of the working out of the plan for human salvation. He was delegated to create the earth. He reports to the Father the progress and ultimate completion of the plan. Since He made the earth he became, as pertains to the earth, our Creator and our Father; as He performs this work in behalf of His Father He becomes the Mediator between God and man; as He died for man He became our Redeemer. In every particular He is the representative, leader, captain, and director of the army of men and women. He is our beloved, worshipped Elder Brother. Therefore, we speak of the plan as the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and we pray to God in the name of His Son, Jesus the Christ.

Through the atonement of Jesus the bodies of all who have died, the whole human family will be resurrected. Saint and sinner, black and white, will recover their bodies

through the service of the Redeemer. The effect of the sacrifice of Jesus is unlimited, universal. The mission of the Savior does even more. The plan of salvation which is under His supervision on earth offers salvation to all. Salvation may be as universal as the resurrection. By the service of Jesus, the Christ, man is placed on the road of eternal progression. With his body as an ally, a tool, if he so wills, obedience to the Father's law, he may go forward, progressively, endlessly. It is possible for all men to attain to salvation.

So universal is the opportunity for salvation provided in the Gospel that those who have died without a knowledge of the law may be taught it in the spirit world, and if they accept it, they will be judged as if they had obeyed the law on earth. The earth ordinances will be done for them by proxy, in the temples, and if accepted by the dead will be valid, effective, and satisfactory to the law.

There is, however, a vital difference which all must keep in mind: Resurrection is an unconditional gift to all men through the atonement; salvation is conditional upon obedience to the principles of the Gospel.

Such then is man's relationship to the plan of salvation. It was formulated by the Father and accepted by all who come upon earth. Jesus was appointed to supervise and to carry out the plan. By his sacrifice, every man will be resurrected unconditionally. By his teaching every man, by obedience to that which is taught, may win salvation. By Christ's leadership and mediation man may be brought into the range of divine justice, mercy, and love, and find here and hereafter the joy of the abundant life.

Let it be repeated that the underlying thought with respect to the plan of salvation is that it was conceived in the love of the Father for His children; that Jesus accepted the appointment to suffer for them because of His love for His brothers and sisters; and that mankind, in their spiritual estate, so loved the Father that they gladly accepted the plan. From beginning to end, in every ramification, the plan of salvation is founded in love! How the troubles of the day would vanish if on earth our plans were founded in love! In the midst of this story stands the figure of Jesus, our Savior, as the example and pattern for men to

follow. In His preexistent life His love for us led Him to accept the call to leadership of the plan with its conquest of the grave; in life on earth, He showed the happy way of love; by His love, today, He helps and guides, He wants, He pleads and leads, and He will be with us to the end.

There are and have been those who have sought to discredit Jesus by denying the truth of the facts of His life as recorded in the New Testament, or denying that such a person ever lived. The eminent historian, George Grandes, wrote a book to prove that Jesus was but a myth invented by persons who desired to deceive and mislead their fellows. Such attempts, however, have been unconvincing, not accepted even by those who deny the divinity of Jesus, for allusions to Jesus, dating back in some instances to the days before the crucifixion, are available, the truth of which cannot be gainsaid. The references to him are sufficient to prove that Jesus was a historical figure. Jesus was, as a man, but a humble person, and while His teaching attracted many, the event of His crucifixion was to the historians of that day but one of many cruel events in a turbulent age.

The same may be said of the record of the events of his life. The mention of him by contemporary historians is always accompanied by allusions to the marvelous works he was said to be doing. Moreover, as scholarship has advanced, the manuscripts on which the four Gospels are based are pushed further back, almost to the lifetime of the Savior. It is a mere quibble, an ignoring of established historical fact, to assert that the Gospels do not give a fairly faithful account of the acts and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus came to initiate the Gospel work in the midday of earth's history, to lay its foundations, to start it on its way. At no time did He seek the glamor of fame. He sowed seeds of truth, left the authority of the Priesthood with mortal men, suffered an inglorious death for the whole human race, friend and foe, and commissioned His disciples, who were left behind, to foster and nurture the work so that it might grow and prosper. All this fits in

with the scanty historical notices concerning Him made at the time of His sojourn on earth.

That which Jesus left behind, in the fragmentary accounts of the Gospels, is unique in its exalted power and wisdom. Great men throughout the centuries since Christ was upon earth have testified to the greatness of Jesus, the Teacher and Leader. He seems to all to be more than man.

One of the most famous testimonies of the divinity of Jesus comes from the lips of Napoleon, spoken while the great emperor was living in banishment on St. Helena. He was speaking to his companion, General Bertrand, "I know men; and I tell you that Jesus Christ is not a man. . . . Everything in Him astonishes me. His spirit overawes me, and His will confounds me. Between Him and whomever else in the world there is no possible term of comparison. He is truly a Being by Himself. His ideas and His sentiments, the truth which He announces, His manner of convincing, are not explained either by human organization or by the nature of things. . . . His religion is a revelation from all intelligence which certainly is not that of man."

The influence of Christ has been the mightiest in the world's history, and most effective in changing the hearts of men. George MacDonald says:

> When thou turnest away from ill,
> Christ is this side of thy hill.
> When thou turnest toward good,
> Christ is walking in thy wood.
> When thy heart says, "Father, pardon,"
> Then the Lord is in thy garden.
> When stern duty wakes to watch,
> Then his hand is on the latch.
> But when hope thy song doth rouse,
> Then the Lord is in the house.
> When to love is all thy wit
> Christ doth at thy table sit.
> When God's will is thy heart's pole,
> Then is Christ thy very soul.

Thousands upon thousands of eminent men have testified publicly, by spoken or written word, of their faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and in his divine mission. Millions have learned to know that Jesus is the Savior, Redeemer, the Mediator for men, and have drawn abundant

happiness from that knowledge. Any person who will approach the study of Jesus Christ with a desire to know the truth, and who will test the Gospel by the practice of its principles will receive the convincing assurance of the divine nature and loving mission of Jesus of Nazareth.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **How would you define love?**
2. **How would you define plan?**
3. **Why do you believe in the resurrection of all men?**
4. **State some of the facts that convince you that Jesus of Nazareth was divine.**
5. **What is the effect upon men who become convinced of the divinity of Christ?**
6. **What is the relationship of Jesus to Adam? The human race? The Plan of Salvation?**

CHAPTER 5

THE CERTAIN STEPS OF PROGRESS

(Read the Fourth Article of Faith)

THE first principles and ordinances of the Gospel, by which a person may receive the benefits and blessings of the plan of salvation, are essentially the steps by which achievement and progress may be won in any field of endeavor. The operation of eternal law is never postponed until the hereafter. Every righteous endeavor, here, contributes to the sum of our ultimate victory, there. Every law for spiritual progress may be used in winning temporal success. Life here and life hereafter are but different manifestations of one eternal reality. Reason and common sense give coherence and strength to every Gospel principle and practice.

Faith, the fundamental principle of the Gospel, may be easily understood since it operates in every human concern. Belief in the outcome initiates every human enterprise. Knowledge is the beginning of faith. As belief in the truth of acquired knowledge is established, faith is developed. Certain knowledge is faith. By this definition, faith may be made the measure of human progress, individually and collectively. As faith waxes strong, the power and joy of life increase.

Knowledge is the foundation of intelligent living. Joseph Smith declared, "It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance" and "Knowledge is the pathway up to the Gods." Moreover, knowledge acquired here makes an indelible impression upon the spirit of man; it is imperishable; it continues with the man, in some form, throughout eternity. Again in the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, "whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection." There can be nothing more important than knowledge.

However, only true knowledge leads to faith. Tested knowledge, tested again and again in terms of truth, is the substance of the high belief called faith. Certainty can be derived only from truth. Faith may again be defined as the knowledge of truth. Much false knowledge masquerades

as truth, and deceives men. So-called faith, based upon untruth, soon withers if brought into the open light of daily life and use. The process of building faith is largely the testing of knowledge for its truth.

The extent of faith naturally increases with the increase of knowledge, but the degree of faith depends upon the intensity or certainty of the belief that the knowledge possessed is true. Thus it often happens that great faith may accompany limited knowledge. The humble and unlearned may know without a peradventure of doubt that God lives—such faith will triumph over the half-hearted acceptance of the Divine Father by one who possesses great stores of knowledge.

It is easy enough to understand that in every ordinary human concern faith is necessary. Dams and bridges, houses and towers, are built because of men's belief or faith in principles of construction and strength of materials. Faith supplies the means with which life's structure may be raised; and he who has faith knows that the result will be good. With faith there is certainty of effort, without faith there is chaos of thought and action.

It is the higher realms of faith, those that enter the unseen world, that sometimes raise questions in the minds of the inexperienced. Faith makes use of all the powers of man. It does not stop with that which may be sensed directly by the simpler senses, but invades the unseen universe which may be known only by the use of subtler human gifts. It proceeds to examine the evidences for God and His kingdom. This, however, is only in harmony with current thought and practice. Much, if not most of science concerns the unseen world. Molecules, atoms, and electrons, the composition of the stars and the core of the earth, are known and can be known only through their effects upon certain instruments. Just so, the unseen world of living beings may be known by its effects upon living men. No man-made instrument can be as sensitive and truthful as man, himself, who may fit himself, by righteous living, to be a suitable instrument for the reception of influences from the unseen world. When this is done, faith may and does rise to sublime heights, beyond the understanding of those who will not pay the price in self-con-

quest. We may then know with certainty that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ. This phase of faith is implied by the Apostle Paul in his famous declaration that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Faith is indeed the same foundation of human action. Repentance, the second principle of the Gospel, is a necessary derivative of faith. To believe a thing is not enough. Knowledge must be used, if it is to be made alive. If a person has violated law, done something which he discovers should not have been done, the spirit of repentance, will help him to do it no more. That is turning away from error; that is giving life to faith. Faith is not complete unless so used. Yet it is not sufficient to justify faith by turning away from error. It is equally important to do that which should be done. The repentant man ceases to do wrong; he also does that which is right. Full repentance places both requirements upon the man. Repentance is active faith.

Such repentance has its counterpart in the daily affairs of life. Knowledge is but a dry and dusty husk until used to correct mistakes and to promote human ventures. Repentance in this sense is practiced by all successful persons in every concern of the day. The genuineness of repentance depends usually upon the sincerity of faith. The quality of faith may be gauged by its effect upon human actions, that is upon repentance.

The ordinance of baptism is equally easy to comprehend. The Church is a divinely provided organization of men and women of a common faith. Every organized body requires of its members some form of acquiescence in its purposes and practices, a promise of conformity. Baptism is this initiatory evidence on the part of the candidate admitting him into the fellowship of the Church. It is much like the giving of a contract covering a human transaction. In this instance, the agreement is between a man, the candidate for admission to the Church, and the Lord who is the head of the Church. The man agrees to keep all the laws, regulations, and arrangements of the Church and to observe every word of God as given through his prophets in all ages; and as a signature to the contract he

submits to the ordinance of baptism. He who is baptized into the Church has promised to live in harmony with Gospel requirements. If he fails to do so, he is a contract breaker, a man who does not keep his word or promise.

The form of baptism by immersion is heaven-ordained, but clearly comprehended. Jesus the Christ is the central figure of the plan of salvation. He came on earth to teach the Gospel to man; he died that men may be redeemed from the grave; and he was resurrected into his father's glory, thus pointing to the possible destiny of every man born upon earth. In symbolic manner baptism repeats the story of Jesus—the candidate is buried in the water, arises from it into a new life. By the mode of baptism, the position and vicarious service of Jesus is accepted, and the promise of the resurrection received.

Yet another gift to man is symbolized by baptism. The candidate may have been sinful, but has developed faith in the Lord and the plan of salvation. He has turned away from evil and engaged in good deeds. By baptism he is willing to certify that he will obey the law hereafter. He goes into the water, which is a cleansing agent and comes out again a changed man. He has been cleansed in a high spiritual sense. He may have to pay the physical price for his mortal mistakes, but his errors will not now prevent him from entering the kingdom of Heaven, if he henceforth lives according to the law. Baptism, then, carries with it also the gift of forgiveness of our sins.

So conceived, baptism becomes a beautiful ordinance, symbolizing (1) our agreement with God, henceforth to keep his Law; (2) the leadership of Jesus, the Christ, with the gift of the resurrection through his sacrifice, and (3) the forgiveness of our sins, so that they shall not stand in the way of our progress towards the presence of God.

In natural order comes the last of the four initiatory principles and ordinances of the Gospel: the reception of the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Every person born into the world, saint or sinner, enjoys according to the manner of his life, the presence of the Holy Spirit, which flows from the presence of God to fill all space and to touch every human heart. Life and light and understanding are the gifts of this ever-present

influence. It is the fountain of knowledge. Without it, darkness and despair would cover the earth. It is the universal gift of the Lord to His earthly children. By its means, the humblest and meanest, as well as the highest and best, may communicate with the Father who gave them life on earth.

The gift of the Holy Ghost, the third member of the Godhead, is reserved for those who by faith, repentance, and baptism, have qualified for membership in the authorized community, the church of believers. It confers upon the recipient the official right, as it were, to secure added and higher guidance and protection in the affairs of life. He may approach the Father in prayer, as one who has the right to make certain requests. He is henceforth a co-worker in behalf of the plan of salvation entitled to corresponding help from above. Gifts from heaven, prophecy, healing or tongues, may be conferred upon the petitioner according to his needs and the decrees of heaven. The Holy Spirit is a general gift to all by which they may find their way to truth; the gift of the Holy Ghost is a special gift, conditioned upon the person's proper use of the general gift of the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Holy Ghost includes the companionship of the Holy Ghost, through the agencies under His control, for the comfort, enlightenment and strengthening of man. The rate of progress in all good things may be made more constant and rapid by the gift of the Holy Ghost.

It does not follow that an immediate change comes over the person who is confirmed into the Church. That would be contrary to the ways of life. It is more as if a door were opened, permitting him to enter, if he so desire, or placing before him an instrument, say a radio set, which he may operate at will. The more the gift is used, the greater the facility gained and the blessings obtained. All gifts are conditioned upon our efforts.

This may, in a small way, be compared with the effects upon a person in any mundane pursuit, who conforms to preliminary conditions and thereby, having prepared himself, may more competently perform the work placed before him. The equivalent of the reward for faith,

repentance, and obedience, may be observed in every human pursuit.

Faith, a convincing belief, as the groundwork of action, repentance, a correct use of knowledge by which faith becomes active; baptism, an agreement to abide by the regulations of the Church composed of those who have found faith and practiced repentance and to accept Jesus as the Head of the work; and the reception of the gift of the Holy Ghost, the official participation in the powers of heaven, made possible by man's acceptance of the preceding conditions, by which progress may become more certain and rapid—these form a sequence, a series of natural steps, by which a person may achieve greatly and progress continuously. The first principles and ordinances form a safe, understandable foundation for life in the Church of Christ. They are the necessary first steps in a progressive existence.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **What is faith?**
2. **How are knowledge and faith related?**
3. **How may man know with certainty something which cannot be seen or heard?**
4. **What is the distinction between a principle and an ordinance?**
5. **How is repentance related to faith?**
6. **Why is baptism a necessary precedent to the gift of the Holy Ghost?**

CHAPTER 6

THE NEED AND NATURE OF AUTHORITY

(Read the Fifth Article of Faith)

THE permanent value and the power of an organization or movement are properly measured by its authority. In turn, authority arises from a two-fold root, knowledge, and the correct use of knowledge.

In every day life, sufficient knowledge is required, under the law, of the man who wires a house for electricity, builds a storage dam, or fills a decayed tooth, and these workers are expected to perform their labors for the good of man. The person who knows may speak and act with authority. Divine omnipotence itself must be the product of omniscience. In the fulness of his knowledge lies God's mastery over universal forces. From out of that limitless power, issues his authority. The direction of that authority, for the good of man, is born of the Lord's infinite love. His knowledge is justly and lovingly applied and becomes divine mercy.

The relationship of authority to knowledge, righteously used, appears and reappears in the communications of the Lord to man. "It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance;" (D. & C., Sec. 131:6) and "if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come." (D. & C., 130: 19) "Knowledge is the pathway up to God;" the "Priesthood . . . holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God." (D. & C., 84:19.) In scores of places in sacred writ, knowledge is set forth as a need and a reward of those who would conform to the laws of the plan of salvation.

Authority based on knowledge may be called absolute authority. There is, however, another type known as derived authority. One who knows much may direct one who knows less to perform certain tasks. The highly trained electrician may authorize one who knows little or nothing of the science of electricity to close a switch and thereby to flood a whole city with light. In some such way

the Lord, possessing a fulness of knowledge, confers upon man, who has yet much knowledge to gain, the authority (known as Priesthood in the Church of Christ) to perform certain acts in connection with the plan of salvation. Since man's knowledge is incomplete and imperfect, his authority with respect to the work of the Lord must always be a compound nature—absolute and derived.

Nevertheless, every person must, with all his might, use his authority, whether absolute or derived, intelligently and in the full light of knowledge. And, he must anxiously, ceaselessly seek for further knowledge and understanding, so that his authority may be exercised properly. A servant who does not acquaint himself with his duties cannot successfully carry out the requests of his leader. The first obligation of a person called to a position in the Church is to learn to know and understand his new duties and their requirements, to add knowledge to knowledge so that he may perform his labors to the satisfaction of all concerned. The act of ordination to the Priesthood, or the setting apart to an office in the Church, is completed only when the duties implied are performed intelligently. In the words of Brigham Young, "the Priesthood does not wait for ignorance."

The plan of salvation was formulated and put into operation by our Father in Heaven, whose knowledge and authority are the greatest. The Church is the agent of the Lord in carrying out, on earth, the provisions of the plan. The Church must therefore be able to show that its authority has been derived from the Lord. This was done historically in four visitations to the Prophet Joseph Smith, three of which were participated in by Oliver Cowdery. First, in 1820, the Father and the Son appeared; in 1829, John the Baptist, then Peter, James, and John appeared and conferred, respectively, the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods; and in 1836, several personages of ancient days committed their authority to the present dispensations. (D. & C. 110.) These visitors who brought authority from the unseen world had received their authority from or could trace it to Jesus the Christ, who in turn received His authority from His Father. The Priesthood of every man in the Church should be susceptible of being traced

back to the Lord, through Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. In fact nearly all Priesthood holders in the Church do possess and cherish their Priesthood pedigrees.

Since the plan of salvation is the Lord's, the working out of its provisions on earth must be by His authority. otherwise, the independent assumption of leadership and responsibility by various men would lead to disorder and chaos, both repugnant to the intelligent mind; and might injure other men, for all live under the plan. There is only one source of authority in the Church—that which may be traced back, in an orderly manner, to the visitations to Joseph Smith.

The authority derived from the Lord is known as Priesthood. It is committed to man first to meet personal needs, and also to be used within the Church for carrying out the purposes of the plan of salvation. Since Priesthood roots in knowledge and the intelligent use of knowledge, it must be a real force, a real power, to be used in solving any or all problems of life, whether personal or within the Church. Priesthood is more than a title. It may be likened to the current of electricity which helps man perform his work. It is God's great gift, by which man may be able measurably to do God-like works. Again, in the words of Brigham Young, "it is the law by which the worlds are, were, and will continue forever."

Authority in the Priesthood is conferred according to divine prescription. Those holding authority confer it under proper direction upon others who have lesser authority, or who have none. Those who are about to confer the Priesthood, or set apart for any service in the Church should approach their Heavenly Father, so that the act may be approved by Him—that is, every formal call to any office in the Priesthood or the Church should be of God, through the power of inspiration. Then, by "the laying on of hands by those who are in authority," the proposed authority is conferred upon the candidate. It is a very orderly, simple procedure. It should be noted that Priesthood cannot be conferred by letter or by word of mouth, but only by physical contact, by "the laying on of hands." This was made clear in the first revelation to Joseph Smith,

which says "I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah." (D. & C., Section 2.)

It is evident that Priesthood, essentially the power of God, may exist, whether or not the Church is upon earth. The Lord has possessed His Priesthood or power from "the beginning." Nevertheless, it has been so ordained, that whenever the Church of God is upon earth, all Priesthood on earth should function within it. The Church is the keeper, under the Lord, of the plan of salvation, and of the Priesthood necessary to carry out the provisions of the plan. There can be no holders of the Priesthood who are independent of the Church. This principle is brought out forcefully in the history of the Church. Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had been ordained Apostles by Peter, James and John, and required under that authority to organize the Church of Christ. Yet, after the act of organization was accomplished, Joseph and Oliver were ordained Elders in the Church, that is the Priesthood that they had received was brought under and made a part of the organization of the Church. Indeed, those who had been formerly baptized, for the remission of their sins, including Joseph and Oliver, were rebaptized to become members of the Church. (D. & C., Sec. 22). Any claim to Priesthood or Priesthood authority by those not members of the Church is false and invalid.

Similarly, excommunication from the Church removes from a man every vestige of Priesthood power that he may have possessed. If Priesthood is founded in the light of knowledge, then the man who allows himself to descend to depths of darkness warranting excommunication, cannot legitimately retain his Priesthood power. Should such an excommunicated person repent and be rebaptized, he must have his Priesthood reconfirmed upon his head by the laying on of hands. The claim by excommunicated persons that they retain their Priesthood is also false and invalid. The Church and Priesthood are interwoven; when the Church is upon earth neither can exist independently.

In Summary: The high commission of the Church requires authority from the author of the plan of salvation, which is in the keeping of the Church. This has been re-

ceived under the name of Priesthood. Since Priesthood represents knowledge intelligently used, every Priesthood-bearer must seek enlightenment concerning his obligations and privileges. Every Priesthood act should further be performed after an appeal to the Lord for guidance, and in harmony with the revealed word of God. Whenever the Church is on earth, all Priesthood on earth is a part of its organization; no Priesthood-bearer is independent of the regularly organized Church.

The strength and power of the Church are in its divinely given Priesthood. As it functions so will the Church prosper. In fact the whole truth of the Church depends on the validity of the Priesthood of the Church. Fearless of successful refutation, the Church declares that to it has been committed the authority of the Priesthood, for the blessing of mankind and the advancement of the plan of salvation.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **Compare the authority drawn from knowledge and that derived from a commission from someone with higher authority.**
2. **Why is it necessary that the Priesthood be available to all men of the Church?**
3. **How would you define Priesthood?**
4. **What are the powers of the Priesthood?**
5. **What is prophecy?**
6. **What is the meaning of the phrase "called of God"?**

CHAPTER 7

UNCHANGING FUNDAMENTALS

(Read the Sixth Article of Faith)

MAN upon earth lives under unchanging law. Any apparent deviation from constancy is but man's wilful departure from the established order. It is through obedience and conformity to the one great law, the law of the Gospel, that the greatest freedom and the most perfect happiness may be won. This is a fundamental doctrine to which the Church of Christ ever clings. It is the guarantee of security.

Every part and parcel of man's life on earth under the Gospel law has its origin in the decisions accepted in the great council held before the foundations of the earth were laid. In that preexistent day the body of truth known as the Gospel was formulated for human use. In that day the Church, the community of believers, its purpose, authority, and organization, were planned. On that occasion authority was given for the formation of the earth and the placing of man upon it. In short, the plan of salvation, inclusive of all that pertains to man's life on earth, was there set forth and made authoritative in all of its metes and bounds.

The plan of salvation itself is founded in eternal truth. Every principle and practice enjoined upon man by this great plan is founded in some unchanging relationship of universal laws. Indeed the whole plan of salvation, could man but understand, is a reflection of everlasting truth. The concern of the great council was the use of existing truth in the solution of the problems presented by the needs of the spiritual beings which we know as the human race.

Under such conceptions the invariability of Gospel doctrine and practice must be a fixed law of life. This is indeed a mighty blessing. If the established order of today could be replaced from day to day by devices springing out of man's own desires, chaos would rule. There would be no freedom, for any act of a man might be in opposition to some new-made ruling. The destruction of man and his works would follow, and the purposes of God frustrated.

From yet another angle such constancy is shown to be necessary. The Gospel was formulated for man's good. Every principle and practice of it meets some vital human need. Just as the Savior declared that "man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath was made for man", so we may say that man was not made for the Gospel, but the Gospel was made for man. Should the destructive doctrine of variability in the laws of the Gospel be admitted, the plan of salvation could no longer be said to be for man's good. Gospel constancy is a logical necessity if the plan of salvation was formulated by God for the welfare of his spirit children.

However, let not this conclusion be misunderstood. Invariably in the Gospel refers to fundamentals. Faith and repentance are the foundation principles of the Gospel. They may never be changed. Yet one man approaches the search for faith in one way, another in some other manner, each according to his need. One man must repent from one sin, another from another. Eternal principles may be applied differently, but the result is always the same. Baptism and the conferring of the Gift of the Holy Ghost are foundation ordinances of the Gospel. They are invariable in that they must be performed under divine authority; and baptism must show the full symbolism of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, by immersion in water. Yet the time and place of these acts, whether in a house or under the open sky, whether baptism is in the fresh water of a flowing stream or in the salt water of the ocean is immaterial.

The structure of the Church must likewise be invariable. It is made up of those who have complied with the first principles and ordinances. Its authority and power come from its Priesthood, which in turn must be traceable directly to the Lord from whom Priesthood authority proceeds. That authority must be distributed, according to the divine plan, to meet man's needs, in a definite manner. Were this not done, chaos would result. No one would know his place, rights, or authority. However, it is immaterial whether the members of the Church and its Priesthood bearers serve in one place or another, whether they go on one errand or another.

That is, the eternal, everlasting, unchanging principles of the Gospel may be applied in one manner or another to meet changing needs. In Kirtland, the Priesthood were set to work to build a temple; in the Great Basin of North America, to redeem and to settle upon the desert. Under each condition regulations were set up for the work in hand which became binding upon those called into service. There must always be a body of regulations in the Church, derived from the unchanging fundamental order, to which full conformity should be given by all concerned. Obedience to fundamentals and conformity with derivative regulations are equally binding upon those who have accepted the Gospel.

This thought of unchanging eternal law is set forth in the first part of the sixth article of faith. "We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church," the Church authorized and set in motion by the Savior in his days upon earth. This "Primitive Church" was however patterned after the original Church founded in the days of Father Adam. The Priesthood was conferred upon Adam, and by him and his successors conferred in its varying offices upon many men, and it remained among men until withdrawn because of the apostasy of mankind from the principles of truth.

The divisions and offices of the Priesthood are mentioned in various places in the Bible, but nowhere in full detail. By modern revelation the organization of the Church under Priesthood authority is now clearly understood. All admit its beauty and efficiency. When used, it may become a tremendous power for human good. The Church is governed by the Priesthood. There is but one Priesthood, the Priesthood of God. The lesser or least authoritative divisions, holding temporal keys, is called the Aaronic Priesthood, the greater and more authoritative, holding spiritual keys, the Melchizedek Priesthood, both named for distinguished bearers of the respective Priesthood divisions. In the Lesser Priesthood are deacons, teachers, and priests, under the general supervision or presidency of a bishop. In the Higher Priesthood are elders, seventy, high priests, patriarchs and apostles. Both divisions are under the presidency of three presiding High

Priests, the First Presidency, who have jurisdiction over both divisions of the Priesthood. The different offices of the Priesthood are divided into quorums. Under the Priesthood, the Church is divided territorially, and its work organized for the promotion of the plan of the Lord for the happiness of mankind. All this is set forth clearly in the revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Every office in the Priesthood as revealed in these latter days is mentioned or indicated in the Bible. Most famous of the Biblical enumerations of the Priesthood is the statement of Paul: "And He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints." In these latter days it remained for the Prophet Joseph Smith to show the correct sequence in authority and duty of the various offices of the Priesthood.

The records of the early Christian Church are few and fragmentary. Yet, a candid reading of them leads to the conclusion that the Church organized under the direct authority of the Savior, so far as Priesthood is concerned, is an exact counterpart of the Church of Christ organized in these latter-days. Numerous recent studies by men not of the Latter-day Saint faith show an organization of the Primitive Church in large measure identical with that of the Latter-day Saint Church. As more evidence becomes available, the proof of such identity will become more conclusive. This really is an expected finding, in view of what has been said concerning the invariability in all ages of the fundamental principles and practices of the Gospel. The Church of Christ must conform in its organization, which is fundamental, to the law of the unchanging nature of fundamentals. Such conformity, is, in fact, one of the tests of the true Church.

One thing more needs to be said. According to the Latter-day Saint belief, the Gospel was provided for the benefit of a host of God's spirit children. The human race is a body of actual brothers and sisters from the preexistent estate. They, who by obedience to the requirements of the Gospel, have received the Priesthood, have received the Priesthood, are a special brotherhood concerned, in the words of Paul, with "the perfecting of the saints", "the

building up of the body of Christ", till we all attain unto the unity of "the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God." The Priesthood, with such an objective, becomes the most important brotherhood on earth. When the Priesthood become more conscious of their duties and powers, they will be more greatly blessed, and will become the mightiest power for human good on earth.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **How is freedom derived from law?**
2. **How do you reconcile the doctrine of unchanging fundamentals with the doctrine of eternal progression?**
3. **What is truth? Illustrate.**
4. **Why should the latter-day Church be like the primitive Church in organization?**
5. **What are the obligations of members of a Brotherhood?**
6. **How is the spirit of brotherhood revealed among men?**

CHAPTER 8

THE UNITY OF THE UNIVERSE

(Read the Seventh Article of Faith)

BELIEF in an unseen world is the foremost result of man's modern search for truth. Indeed, the last three centuries are notable for their exploration of the world that cannot be known directly through man's five senses. The telescope, microscope, electroscope, spectroscope, and numerous other aids to man's senses have revealed a vast world wholly beyond the unaided power of man to discover.

Domains wholly different from the world in which man lives have been invaded. The atomic world, of an order far distant from the material universe, and the subatomic world, yet farther away, where electrons rule and matter and energy commingle, are being laid bare through their effects to the understanding of man. The world of mind has likewise been subjected to such study, and unexpected marvels have appeared.

The unseen world seems to be illimitable. Every new aid to man's senses becomes the door to another unbounded science. A new courage has entered the hearts of men. It is felt that knowledge may be added to knowledge throughout the ages, if men but seek it; that the endless search for truth will be endlessly rewarded; that the well of truth can never run dry.

Thus it has come about that the old distinction between the visible and the invisible worlds is fading away. There is but one universe, of many manifestations, some of which may be known directly by man, others by aids to his normal powers. But, no part of the universe is beyond man's ultimate discovery.

The so-called spiritual world is but a special manifestation, probably the most fundamental of our one universe. Joseph Smith so implied when he said, "All spirit is matter, but it is more fine and pure." If that be so, the world of "spirit" may be known by man if he possess the necessary aids, comparable to the radio tube that makes possible the conversion of electrical impulses into words.

This view, strange and foreign to men at large a century ago, seems necessary and rational to men of our day.

The unseen world exists and is explorable in all of its divisions by suitable instruments. The Urim and Thummim of the ancients converted messages of the spirit into understandable human terms. The "two stones set in silver bows" made symbols engraven on golden plates appear in the language known to Joseph Smith. The claim by the Prophet that he needed such help is an evidence of the rationality of the process as of his honesty.

The common aids to human senses—the telescope and the like—are made by man of available materials. However, man, himself, possessed of an organization superior to all else on earth, may become sensitive to influences from the unseen world. This possibility is now recognized by reputable workers in the field of science. Many phenomena of earth can be explained in no other way. Clairvoyance and its related experiences are being subjected to orderly, scientific study. This field of investigation has led to a new branch of psychology. More and more it is becoming recognized that the constitution of man is such as to permit him to serve as a "converter" of spiritual impressions into comprehensible material terms.

This possibility was set forth clearly by Joseph Smith, the Prophet: "All spirit is matter, but it is more fine and pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes; we cannot see it, but when our bodies are purified we shall see that it is all matter." The lens of the telescope must be ground properly; and by the same token man must fit himself to receive spiritual impressions. Let it be remembered that the Prophet Joseph Smith at first "enquired of the Lord through the Urim and Thummim," but later, as he became more fit, laid aside the assisting instrument, and became, himself, a medium through whom the voice of God could be heard.

Such a conception of the possibility of intercommunication among the various parts of the one universe, makes the doctrine of spiritual gifts easily comprehended. In fact, it would have reflected upon the integrity of the system ushered in by the Prophet Joseph Smith if these gifts of the spirit had not been frankly avowed and accepted. Man's communication with the intelligent beings in the in-

visible world becomes a natural experience, one to be expected by those who are in a suitable condition for reception.

Revelation becomes, then, the speech of the universal intelligent power, God, for the guidance of man, a speech that may be received and understood only by those having "purer eyes," that is, who by self-effort or by divine means have been fitted for the necessary receptivity. Visions are but another type of revelation, accorded probably in harmony with personal development. Prophecy implies that the prophet is an instrument through which the unseen universe speaks to the visible universe. "Speaking in tongues" and interpreting "tongues" are likewise special forms of the voice of God to his children on earth. He who blesses the sick in accordance with the divine formula stands as the means through which healing power flows from the spiritual world into the ailing material body. There is really no mystery about spiritual gifts, perhaps only a wonder that they are ever questioned.

Such communications with the spiritual domain occur only for definite purposes. Intelligence implies plan and purpose. Revelation, visions, and prophetic utterances are given when needed, and then only. The gift of tongues is of chief value when one needs to make himself understood in a language foreign to him, or as a testimony of spiritual truth. Healing of the sick is always conditional upon the divine purpose for those who are suffering. People who are "hearing and seeing things," when no purpose demands, are probably suffering from hallucinations.

Spiritual gifts can be expected only when men are properly "purified," or "tuned," to use a radio comparison. Faith, repentance, obedience to law, purity of life, these and conformity to all Gospel requirements, and especially prayer for the gift, effect the changes necessary for spiritual communication. Not only must there be a purpose in the manifestation of such gifts, but men must be worthy to receive them. Let no man deceive himself on that score. This was clearly understood by Moses who first declares that he saw God because "the glory of God" was upon him; and then explains that "now mine own eyes have beheld God; but not my natural, but my spiritual eyes." Such

a transformation, which to some degree is needed to become sensitive to spiritual manifestations, is based primarily upon a righteous life.

Closely associated with the gifts of the spirit is the authority of the Priesthood. The Holy Spirit moves upon all men, but those who possess the Priesthood have official authority, if they are otherwise prepared, to receive revelation and other gifts from the Source of Truth and use them for the benefit of those who are in need. The Priesthood, properly received and respected, effects profound changes in the man, which make him as it were a ready conductor of the stream of spiritual power.

In the organized Church of Christ all things are done in order. Therefore, the man who presides over the Church, and he alone, can or will receive revelations from God for the Church as a whole. It is so with all officers of the Church, each may claim spiritual guidance within his assigned field, but no farther. Nevertheless, all may win support in their personal affairs, or manifestations for their personal comfort. The unity and continuity of the universe are beautifully set forth in many of the revelations to the Prophet Joseph Smith. For example "the spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the spirit." In Section 50 of the Doctrine and Covenants, dealing with the spiritual relationship among humanity, it is stated that, "He that receiveth the word by the Spirit of truth receiveth it as it is preached by the Spirit of truth. Wherefore he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together." The implication of unity is there made very clear.

One warning must be given. Both good and evil forces operate in the invisible as in the visible world. Both may communicate with men in accordance with the conditions in which they have placed themselves. Men are sometimes deceived by evil communications. Yet, it need not be so, for sure tests have been given. Here is one, beautiful in language and thought: "That which doth not edify is not of God, and is darkness. That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God,

receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day."

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. What seems to you to be a chief evidence of the existence of an unseen world?
2. How may a person receive communications from the unseen world?
3. What is the purpose of the spiritual gifts of the Church?
4. How may a person recognize deceiving, evil forces from out the unseen world?
5. Why is the doctrine of the unity of the universe necessary in the Gospel of Jesus Christ?
6. What is the function of the Priesthood in all spiritual experiences?

CHAPTER 9

THE PRESERVATION OF GOD'S WORD

(Read the Eighth Article of Faith)

THE Lord spoke to Adam, the first man, and taught him the Gospel. Adam, in turn, taught the Gospel to his posterity. Thus, a knowledge of the Gospel became current among all men. Similarly, the Lord has spoken, whenever necessary, to other men, who have taught to their fellows that which has been divinely revealed to them.

That is the divine method. The Lord imparts knowledge to men, usually called prophets, who thenceforth are under obligation to transmit the substance of their revelations, as far as possible, to all the world. Then, to every man is given the companionship of the Holy Spirit, by which the truth of the prophetic teaching is revealed. The prophet and his followers are both taught by revelation; both may be equally certain of the truth of the message.

The revealed word of God may be spread among all people from generation to generation by word of mouth, by oral tradition. This was the earliest method and in some respects the best. No teaching is quite so powerful as that which comes from the mouth of a great teacher. However, as the years receded, it became increasingly difficult for successive teachers to make from memory accurate renderings of the words of the prophets. Moreover, the human voice does not reach far, yet the divine message is for all men. Therefore, a second method became of prime importance, that of committing the words of the prophet to writing, and of making many copies for wide circulation. To the arts of writing and printing, mankind owes the more accurate preservation and wider distribution of the revealed Word of God.

The Bible and the Book of Mormon are collections of writings in which the truth of existence and the divine formula for correct living are taught and taught again. The message of these scriptures is conveyed in various forms. Sometimes the writer quotes the words of God; at other times he comments on the divine message in poetry, story,

allegory, exposition or simple admonition; and as often he shows the effect of conformity to the divine will as illustrated in the history of nations—in the Bible, especially of the Israelitish nation, and in the Book of Mormon of the branches of that nation which settled in America.

One dominating doctrine runs through the books of the Bible and the Book of Mormon: There is one God, the Father of mankind, who reveals as may be necessary the laws by obedience to which men may alone win happiness in life. Whether in direct statement, in figure of speech, or in historical narrative, this doctrine is the concern of the writers of the scriptures. Indeed, the Bible and the Book of Mormon contain the most complete exposition existing of God's law for human conduct and destiny. It is this message for the moral guidance of humanity, coming from the Lord, that makes the Bible the "Book of Books" and the Book of Mormon a witness for the Bible.

The Lord does His work in man's behalf through earthly instruments. All human writings, therefore, however exalted by the power of inspiration, are in the language of the writer. Were it not so, perhaps the readers could not understand. This has been made very clear as concerning the revelations to the Prophet Joseph: "These commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding." Moroni, the Book of Mormon prophet, expressed this condition in a beautiful statement: "Thou hast also made our words powerful and great, even that we cannot write them; wherefore when we write we behold our weakness, and stumble because of the placing of our words: and I fear lest the gentiles shall mock at our words." In such a spirit of humility have the scriptures been written.

The message of the scriptures is divine; the words in which it is clothed are human. Failure to make this distinction has led to much misunderstanding. Intelligent readers will separate the message of the scripture from its form of presentation, even as is done today, whether listening to a speaker or reading a modern book. It is in this sense that the Latter-day Saints look upon the Bible and the Book of Mormon as "the Word of God."

Especially is it necessary in reading the scriptures to place oneself in the position of the people, thousands of years ago, for whom the writings were made. The customs, habits, and possessions of the people of that day are of necessity reflected in the expositions of the revelations of the Lord to His children on earth. Events and acts that seem foreign to us of this day, of necessity appear in the scriptures. In a terse question, Brigham Young made this clear: "Do you read the scriptures, my brethren and sisters, as though you were writing them, a thousand, two thousand, or five thousand years ago? Do you read them as though you stood in the place of the men who wrote them?" If that were done, much carping criticism of the scriptures would vanish.

Likewise, honest translators, working with present manuscripts, often find it difficult to render with full accuracy, in living tongues, the meanings expressed in languages long dead. Also, despite the best intentions, the translations are likely to reflect the point of view of the translator. While the Church uses primarily and officially King James' translation, it welcomes every effort of scholarship to improve present translations.

Before the day of printing, each copy of the scriptures, as contained in the Bible, was copied by hand. Naturally, errors crept in. Words, sentences, or whole paragraphs might be left out. Misunderstandings led to false renderings. Countless such cases have been found. Then, some scribe might change the very text to conform to his preconceived ideas. Such variations from the oldest known texts have also been found. Since the original manuscripts of the Old and New Testaments have long since been lost, it is impossible, except through revelation, to restore the scriptures to their original purity.

Nevertheless, the hand of the Lord has always been over these divine records. Neither writer nor copyist has been able to distort or erase the essential message of the Bible. Throughout the ages, amidst the vicissitudes of time, in the face of apparent inaccuracies and contradictions, showing human imperfections, the Holy Scriptures stand unclouded as a witness for God, His nature and relationship to man, the true way to human happiness, and

the eternal and glorious destiny of mankind. The scriptures have never been wholly at the mercy of mankind. He who reads them today may know, as the prophets who received them, of the eternal truths of existence.

In this sense, one must read the statement that "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly." The message of the Bible is accepted; its mutilations by careless men are rejected.

In the first year of the restored Church, the Prophet Joseph Smith set about, under divine command and direction, to correct errors that had crept into the Biblical text. He may be said to be one of the early "higher critics," but one who worked with faith in the divine message of the Bible. Some parts of this work are found in the Pearl of Great Price; others are not yet published by the authority of the Church. However, every change and correction made by the Prophet illuminates the content of the Bible, and shows how carefully single texts should be weighed against its one great message. In fact, Latter-day Saints are less concerned with the texts than with the whole message of any book of the Bible.

The Book of Mormon differs from present versions of the Bible in that it was translated by "the gift and power of God." The translation is correct. The errors of copying found in the Bible are practically absent in the Book of Mormon, for, as far as known, the only copying is the condensation by an ancient prophet of material on certain plates, into the text of the Book of Mormon. Joseph Smith, the Prophet, records in his journal: "I told the brother that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book." With this we can safely agree.

The Bible and the Book of Mormon are their own witnesses for the truth of their message. No other literature in the world abounds in such lofty teachings. None has such power to lift the soul of man from the sordid things of life. None speaks with such convincing power of God and his dealings with man. None gives such courage to walk the path of truth. None so clearly points out the true and safe walk of life. These books contain the most pre-

cious truths of humanity; without them, the earth would be poor indeed.

All should read the scriptures regularly daily. Better than gold or fame or power are the vision and growth that come to him who feeds upon the life-giving, immortal thoughts spread over the pages of the Holy Scriptures.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **What do you hold to be the real message of the Old Testament?**
2. **Why in your opinion was Joseph Smith called to translate the Book of Mormon before the Church was organized?**
3. **What is the special value of the Pearl of Great Price?**
4. **Name your six favorite revelations from the Doctrine and Covenants.**
5. **What Gospel principles, if any, are missing from the New Testament?**
6. **What is the relative value to living men of the scriptures and the living oracles of the Priesthood?**

CHAPTER 10

ETERNAL INCREASE

(Read the Ninth Article of Faith)

REVELATION is the communication by divine means of the will of God to man.

Those who accept God as the Maker of man and all things about him must perforce accept the possibility of revelation. To deny such possibility is to say that intelligence does not direct the universe, or that the Organizer of the heavens and the earth cannot directly approach His creations. Either alternative, in the light of present knowledge, is unthinkable.

The necessity of revelation is also evident. The Lord devised a plan for man's continued progress. Man accepted it, including its several conditions, such as forgetfulness of the preexistent state. It became necessary, therefore, in the very beginning of the human sojourn on earth, to teach and explain to man the principles and practices, the ordinances and obligations of the plan. For this purpose the Lord revealed Himself to the first man. Thus, revelation dates from the beginning of human history. But, man is a free agent and often uses his will imperfectly. When he departs, as he has frequently done, from the right path, those who come after him, for lack of information, may travel through life in ignorance of the requirements of the plan. On such occasions it becomes necessary for the Higher Intelligence to speak from the unseen world and to place man again on the road to progressive happiness. Or, though man may not depart from the truth, he needs to receive more light, than he possesses from those of higher wisdom. Without guidance from above, revelation, man would be without chart or compass for life's voyage. Intelligence as well as justice demands divine guidance through revelation.

The relationship between man and God, that of child and Father, makes revelation an expected experience. A loving, earthly father would not refuse his children counsel and companionship or hesitate to help them in times of distress, especially if they were laboring under his plan. It

is impossible to conceive of our Heavenly Father as a cold, icy figure in the boundless depths of space, careless of His children on earth. He must be a Being, the warmth of whose love surpasses the sum of human tenderness, and who naturally expresses Himself to His children in some form of revelation.

The manner in which communication is established between man and the divine domain is not always the same. Even as mortal men speak face to face, or by agents, or by telephone, radio, and letter, so there are many avenues by which Divinity may speak to humanity. God may appear in person; He may dispatch heavenly messengers, or He may transmit His word by the Holy Spirit. Personal appearances characterize the beginning of important events, such as the opening of a new dispensation of time. On other occasions, angels have brought the message. The Holy Spirit is always the guide of men whose wills are directed toward righteousness, and therefore in tune with spiritual things. The manner of revelation matters little. The certainty of it and the meaning of its message must remain.

The reality of past revelation rests upon historical evidence. Adam, Moses, Elijah, Joseph Smith, and others have declared that they spoke with the Lord, face to face. Others have stated that they have received divine communication through angelic visitors or by the Holy Spirit. We have the right to test these claims by the usual methods of discovering truth, and, unless this is done, we may not question the veracity of these and other great men. When the initiation, manner, sequences, and results of such visitations and experiences are examined and found to be sound, the events must be placed with the best established facts of history. But, like any other search after truth, the evidence for the reality of revelation must be pursued prayerfully, with full desire to know the truth, and with readiness to accept it when found.

Consider the first vision of Joseph Smith. It has a natural sequence: A boy seeks for truth; he finds isolation from outside, disturbing influences; he kneels to ask God for help; an evil power attacks him, almost overcomes him; he vanquishes it by intense effort; he utters his prayer; the

vision with its message comes; and from the event issues the "marvelous work and a wonder" known popularly as "Mormonism." The steps toward the consummation of the vision are flawless. If any step, say the battle with darkness, had been left out, we might have doubted; if the message and its results had failed to lift men into greater light of truth, we might have hesitated to accept the validity of the vision. As the story of the vision now stands, the earnest truth-seeker feels its certain truth. All revelations may be so examined and tested for their truth. The revelations of the Lord, past and present, will be found to be not only real, but the best and safest guides for human conduct.

Inquiry is often made concerning the language in which divine revelation is given. The answer is found in modern revelation. Seldom are divine revelations dictated to man, unless it be where personal visitations of the Lord occur. Instead, ideas are impressed upon the mind of the recipient, who then delivers the ideas in his own language. When Oliver Cowdery failed to obtain the gift of translation, the Lord said to him: "You have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me. But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right. But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong."—(*Doc. and Cov.,* Sec. 9:7-9.)

This doctrine may be applied to all revelations. The same doctrine is expressed by Nephi in the Book of Mormon: "For the Lord God giveth light unto the understanding; for he speaketh unto men according to their language, unto their understanding." (*Book of Mormon,* 2 Nephi 31:3.) The thought or idea is of divine origin; the language or form of expression is of mortal men "in their weakness." Were this not so, it would be more difficult to understand the revelations of God to man. When therefore a passage of wondrous beauty or feeling occurs in a divine message, it is the natural result of the exalted feeling induced by

inspiration which makes it easy to clothe the revealed truth in beautiful words and sentences.

Revelation is an integral part of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He, the Son of God, the Firstborn, came down on earth and dwelt in the flesh with men. Thus, He revealed Himself to humanity; taught them the law of the Gospel, and conferred upon His disciples the authority to carry forward the work He had begun. All this was as in the beginning, when God spoke to Adam and conferred the Priesthood on him; and as a prototype of the future event when God spoke to Joseph Smith and conferred the Priesthood authority on him. An unfailing test of the true Church of Christ is the possession of the active principle of revelation.

The Church is guided today, as it ever has been, by revelation. The men who have presided and are presiding over the Church, have been and are directed by revelation. Their utterances, spoken when they stand before the people in the authority of their callings, are words of inspiration. Every member of the Church holding official position, and faithful in his calling, receives inspiration and assistance in his labors from the Power from on high, which are as revelation to him. Likewise all members of the Church, whether or not they hold official positions, provided they are faithfully living the lives of Latter-day Saints, have claim upon divine inspiration to guide them in the affairs of their lives. Thus, the highest to the least in the Kingdom of God may claim in their labors direction by revelation, each for his own work and no further, and each subject to the revelations given those holding higher offices in the organized Church.

This does not deprive man of the privilege and power of searching out knowledge for himself. Indeed, it is the duty of man, endowed with intelligence, to use his powers earnestly in the study of the universe in which he finds himself and to discover its truths. Yet the final outcome of such searching is dependent upon the help that comes from the Lord—upon revelation.

Revelation must be continuous. The fundamental principles of existence may be communicated at one time, but man, in his progress towards perfection, must be guided

in applying these truths to daily, changing conditions. The possession of the full volume of revelation, setting forth all truth and disposing of every human contingency, would be fatal to progress, and would cancel the right of the free agent. Man would not then need to find his way in semi-darkness by faith; hence he would weaken in will, and move towards a static condition. It is a basic doctrine of the Gospel that man must win his salvation by self-effort, and that outside help should be administered only in time of special need. Since man is engaged in an eternal journey, his need of divine help is never ending, that is, revelation must ever be an available guiding force in human progress.

Knowledge which always precedes use, rises high in a program involving continuous revelation. We shall be forever learning, approaching perfection throughout the eternities, but by infinitely small steps. The revelations of the Lord add knowledge to knowledge; every forward step is the proper use of knowledge gained. At no time has all knowledge been available. Adam received "a fulness of the Gospel" in the sense that by the use of the principles taught he would be able to command further revelation as needed. It is so in our day. Each dispensation has its own peculiar needs which are met by revelation. Followers of Jesus, the Christ, must be engaged forever in the process of learning. Then eternal progress is made possible.

It may also happen in the progressive life of man that truth used in one age, under one condition, having served its purpose, may be laid aside, or displaced by truth needed under new conditions. For example, in the Sinaitic wilderness the Hebrews needed one set and kind of regulations; in the days of Isaiah another, and in the days of Christ yet another. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye . . . But I say unto you, that ye shall not resist evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." (Matt. 5:38-39.) This thought is set forth also by Alma, the Nephite prophet: "The Lord doth grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word, yea, in wisdom, all that he seeth fit that they should have." (*Book of Mormon,* Alma 29:8.) Such a doctrine is in line of progress and does not

violate fundamental truth. Eternal truth is never abrogated; the same everlasting principles permeate all divine communication; but the fitting use of such truth and principles in the life of progressive man is not only expected, but indeed required. In such development, man needs the help of revelation.

Here then is the great and grand meaning of the doctrine of continuous revelation: That, with the help of God, man may draw eternally upon the inexhaustible font of knowledge; that the natural endowment of man is such that through the endless ages he may add knowledge to knowledge, and that thus he may eternally increase his power for righteousness. The high destiny of man is eternal increase—leading from increasing knowledge to increasing power, to increasing likeness of the Giver of Revelations. Revelation, past, present, and future, here and hereafter, is the means by which such unending progress is made possible.

The priceless gift of revelation does not come unsought. Man must seek it, pray for it, work for it, fit himself to receive it. Every revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith was an answer to a request uttered by him. It has ever been so and will ever be so. Under this law, all righteous men who earnestly seek for divine guidance may receive it. The Lord does not fail His children.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **What is received by revelation? Cite examples.**
2. **Why is revelation the necessary Gospel foundation?**
3. **Why must revelation be endless?**
4. **What is the place of knowledge in the Gospel of Jesus Christ?**
5. **How may a person fit himself for divine guidance?**
6. **Enumerate some of the various methods by which the Lord communicates his will and knowledge to men on earth.**

CHAPTER 11

GOD IS ALWAYS VICTORIOUS

(Read the Tenth Article of Faith)

THE plan for human welfare, conceived and put into execution by the Lord, includes a program of events by which indeed the progress of the plan may be observed. Many of these predicted events—such as the coming of man, the episode of the Garden of Eden, the sacrifice of Christ, the restoration of the Gospel in the last days—have already occurred; others, as mentioned in the Tenth Article of Faith, are yet to transpire.

These events, despite man's frequent failure to accept the conditions of the plan, have been steadily realized throughout the long periods of man's occupancy of the earth. That is but an evidence that man does not have the power to defeat the purposes of the Lord. Endowed with free agency, man may accept or reject truth, may abide in the faith or forsake it, but the God of Israel, He who slumbers not nor sleeps, moves irresistibly forward to the destined goal. Man can defeat only his own high possibilities.

In the faith of the Latter-day Saints there is the certainty that the foretold events of the last dispensation of the Gospel will surely come to pass. God speaks, eternity hears, and in the end all creation obeys! "My name is Jehovah, and I know the end from the beginning; therefore my hand shall be over thee." The Latter-day Saints look eagerly forward to the fulfillment of the prophecies and promises pertaining to the last days in which we live.

The promise has been made to the faithful, the true children of Israel, often despised, who have been and are scattered among the nations of the earth, that in the last days they shall be gathered to form peoples of power and influence. The history of the Latter-day Saints shows the fulfillment of this promise, a fulfillment which will become more largely accomplished with the advancing years.

Such a promise was given to Abraham of old, respecting his descendants and the Holy Land. This promise seems now in process of fulfillment. Let it be said, how-

ever, that the present return of the Jews to their ancient homeland may only be a temporary, preparatory chapter in the story of Jewry. The promise was made to Abraham and his seed; but in modern revelation it is made clear that the seed of Abraham who have a claim upon the promised blessings are those who possess the "ministry and Priesthood" of Abraham. "As many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father." The question arises whether the redemption of Palestine will be accomplished until the Jews and their brethren yield obedience to the Gospel and receive the Priesthood.

The promise has also been made that in the last days the lost tribes of Israel shall be found and return to their brethren, the Jews, to win the blessings of their great ancestor. This promise seems also to be in process of fulfillment. A world-wide study, still in full operation, has shown that the blood of Israel is widely scattered among the nations of earth, so widely indeed that perhaps no nation is devoid of it. The location of the main body of the lost tribes is not known. Some believe that it is hidden in the northern wastes of earth, others that it is mingled with the northern nations of Europe. It does not matter. In one way or another the lost tribes will return or are returning to claim their ancient privilege—the Gospel and the Priesthood.

The gathered people of the Lord will be organized, under the Gospel plan, over the face of the earth. There will be administrative centers, the chief of which will be the city of Zion. This foremost center, from which the word of the Lord will issue, will be built upon the western, American continent. Another such important center will be Jerusalem, on the eastern continent, from which will issue the law based upon the word of God. An understandable order and naturalness will mark the last as the first days.

When the last days approach the end, the true Ruler of Earth will appear to take possession of His own. Jesus the Christ will come to reign personally upon earth. To Him was committed the task of building the earth; to Him was assigned the labor and pain of human redemption; He

has ever been the mediator between God and man, the advocate of humanity before the Father. Of right, He comes to preside over the earth and the human family when the program of the temporal earth shall approach the end. To this joyful association with our Leader, our Elder Brother, every Latter-day Saint looks earnestly forward.

Then at length the earth chapter of the eternal plan will come to an end. Every spirit who accepted the plan in the Great Council will have been born to earth into a mortal body and will have passed through the change called death. All will be in readiness for the next chapter of the plan—one of enduring joy, in which the spirits of the first estate, clothed with the resurrected purified bodies of the second estate, shall forever, in their third estate, with increasing power, in endless works of righteousness, approach the likeness of God, their Eternal Father. So great is the glory of that last estate, that no mortal man can behold it, "and afterwards remain in the flesh upon the earth."

These members of the human race, who have thus been added upon, will possess the earth as their abiding place. To be fit for the presence of such ecclesiastialized beings, the earth itself must undergo a glorious transformation. It will be of the same order of glory as of those who shall live upon it.

This use of the earth is possible, because in the economy of the Lord, it is a living organism, one which has been ever obedient to the law placed upon it. This was revealed to Joseph Smith, the Prophet, in noble words: "Verily I say unto you, the earth abideth the law of a celestial kingdom, for it filleth the measure of its creation, and transgresseth not the law—wherefore, it shall be sanctified; yea, notwithstanding it shall die, it shall be quickened again, and shall abide the power by which it is quickened, and the righteous shall inherit it." We do well to love Mother Earth from whom the substances of our bodies came, who shall care for them to the day of resurrection, and who shall be our abiding place throughout unutterable ages of eternity.

The earth, prepared for the righteous, who have won celestial glory, will become like a paradise, the garden into which our first parents were placed—a sinless abode

of God. It will perform functions of great consequence to its inhabitants, best set forth in the words of a revelation to Joseph Smith, the Prophet. "This earth, in its sanctified and immortal state, will be made like unto crystal and will be a *Urim and Thummim* to the inhabitants who dwell thereon, whereby all things pertaining to an inferior kingdom, or all kingdoms of a lower order, will be manifest to those who dwell upon it, and this earth will be Christ's."

With unshakable faith, knowing that God is always victorious and will secure the fulfillment of His plan, Latter-day Saints look forward, without doubt, to the coming events that will witness to the truth of the message of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and also to the presence of the last days of the story of earth.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **Who are the children of Israel?**
2. **How old is the plan of salvation?**
3. **If God is always victorious, how do you explain the many apostacies from the truth during the course of human history?**
4. **What are the various meanings of the word ZION?**
5. **Who will inhabit the celestialized earth?**
6. **What is the destiny of the Church of God?**

CHAPTER 12

THE TOLERANT SPIRIT

(Read the Eleventh Article of Faith)

GROWTH is the essential objective of the plan of salvation—constant, unending growth. The powers of man must be developed, increased with every passing day. In the terminology of the Gospel, man must ever be in a state of progression. The original degree of man's powers matters little; their steady increase is of much concern. Final judgment will be based on the use that a man has made of the talents committed to him.

Growth, confined by its very nature to living things, is ever from within. It can never come from the outside as a soldier puts on a uniform. It is a process of unfolding. Such development of innate powers comes from self-effort. The individual must consciously set about to sharpen, increase, develop his natural gifts. One traveler through a new land sees but houses flitting by the train; another sees the spirit of a foreign civilization. One student masters the shell of a subject; another pries into its soul. It all depends upon individual self-effort.

Self-effort, in turn, is an expression of choice. Man may choose to engage in the toil and labor that lead to progression; or to stand idly by as others advance; or even to engage in practices that destroy in part his natural endowment. This right to choose his way through the ages of time is often called the free agency of man. It is the distinguishing mark of intelligent creatures. It is the dearest, most priceless possession of every individual. Indeed, every person may be measured by the use he makes of his free agency.

This principle has been recognized from the beginning of time. The battle in the Great Council of pre-existent time concerned man's free agency. The plan of God provided that, through self-effort, aided by divine love, man should become fitted for celestial glory. Lucifer proposed that all mankind should be saved without any effort of their own. "Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man,

which I, the Lord God, had given him, * * * I caused that he should be cast down; and he became Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will. . . ." (Moses 4:3, 4.) On that occasion, the Lord placed the seal of His approval upon the principle of progression through self-effort, made possible by the possession of free agency.

Likewise, at the beginning of earth time Adam and Eve stood forth as free agents. "And I, the Lord God, took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it. And I, the Lord God, commanded the man, saying: Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee. . . ." (Moses 3:15-17.) The commands of God, in the higher sense, are but statements of cause and effect; they never seek to abrogate the right of the human will.

In modern revelation this principle has been set forth with great lucidity: "The Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself." (2 Nephi 2:16.) "All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence. Behold, here is the agency of man." (Doctrine and Covenants 94:30, 31.) There can be no question about the inalienable right of man to possess and to exercise the right of free agency.

In full accord with this doctrine Latter-day Saints claim the right to think and worship as they choose, so long as it is not contrary to the law of the land in which they live, and not an infringement upon the rights of others. For that matter, any attempt to coerce men in their beliefs, or in their practices under the law, is held to be of the evil one. Full freedom of thought, speech, and action, restrained only by the law of the land and the rights of others, is a vital tenet of "Mormonism." Carried to its logical conclusion, this means that in the Church every person must finally rest his membership upon his own personal conviction of the truth of the offered body of doctrine and practice.

Nevertheless, though the freedom to choose for oneself in all issues of life is a gift of indescribable worth, it must be remembered that it is as a two-edged weapon. Properly used it will move man upward; but, improperly used, it will as surely push man downward. It was by the exercise of their free agency that Lucifer and his followers became the devil and his cohorts. This was clearly expressed by the ancient prophet Nephi: "Men are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great mediation of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil." (2 Nephi 2:27.) And the prophet Alma warned that "Every man receiveth wages of him who he listeth to obey." (Alma 3:27.)

In the use of free agency a certain infallible guide is available. Truth leads upward into enlightenment; falsehood, downward into darkness. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," said the Savior to His disciples. Whoever would use their free agency safely, must, first of all, be lovers of and seekers after truth. Tradition, preconceived notions, life's practices—all must be laid aside, if need be, in the acceptance of truth. The will for truth, which is the will for righteousness, must be established. Only then can the gift of free agency be safely employed.

While every man should claim the right to believe and worship as he chooses, he must always remember that all other men have equal claim upon the same privilege. Whoever love the right of personal choice will respect the same right of their fellow men. That is, the effect of the principle of free agency is to make men tolerant of one another's beliefs. That does not mean a surrender of any cherished truth, but, merely, the recognition of the fact that every man, in his own way, must be allowed to discover the path that leads to progression. Clearly, the possessor of truth must teach the truth to others; if they choose to listen, he must help the wanderers into light; but in no instance must compulsion of any kind be used. Truth once taught will come to life in a heart not steeled against it.

The Latter-day Saints, therefore, are a tolerant people. They know that they possess the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in its purity. At great sacrifice they teach this system of truth to all the world; but always as bearers of truth to a world that has full right to accept or reject the offering. They may grieve over the blindness of humanity, over the world's self-made sorrows, but always with the hope that some day those who now cannot see will open their eyes to the light of truth.

The spirit of tolerance makes Latter-day Saints glad to know that a person has even a fragment of the Gospel in his possession. It is better to accept one Christian doctrine, than none at all.

In the same tolerant spirit the Church deals with lukewarm or drifting members. They have their free agencies. To them the Church offers its teachings in the hope of acceptance. Naturally, those who do not accept the Gospel truth cannot be allowed to serve as officers or teachers of the Church, for in offering false leadership and teaching, the Church would not be honest to itself or its members.

Great is the thought that man, small as he seems to be in the midst of infinite realities, yet has the right to choose his way through universal time, and thus to spell out in ceaseless acts the sentence to be imposed upon him in the great day of judgment.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **How is true love manifested?**
2. **Why are love, tolerance and progress dependent one on the other?**
3. **Why must Latter-day Saints be a tolerant people?**
4. **In what sense is salvation a cooperative enterprise between God and man?**
5. **Why are intelligence and free agency always associated?**
6. **What is the foremost law of Gospel action?**

CHAPTER 13

THE REIGN OF LAW

(Read the Twelfth Article of Faith)

OUR incomparable civilization—electrified, motorized, radioed, and synthesized from elements until lately unknown—was born about three hundred years ago. Looking back, the impelling, creative cause of the mighty changes wrought during three short centuries is easily recognized.

Three hundred years ago most men thought that they lived in a world of chaos. Any regularity of nature might be upset by the occult operations of an alchemist or a witch. Occultism ruled the beliefs of men. Magic and the black arts kept fear in human hearts. Weird dancing under the full moon at midnight might cause a pestilence in a distant city; or stewing fingernails at midnight, but in the dark of the moon, might defeat an army. Men could sell their souls to the devil for money or power; fairies, elves, and gnomes could play pranks upon human beings or actually harm them. The law of yesterday might be nullified today. Nothing was stable or certain. Disorder ruled the universe. Men lived intolerable lives under such fables and "old wives' tales."

All this has been done away with in the new age, to which we belong. Men now know that nature is orderly; that the law of today, if surrounding conditions remain unchanged, is the law of tomorrow, or of eternity. Constancy is nature's first distinguishing mark.

Innumerable experiments have confirmed the view of continued regularity in nature. The recent doctrine of indeterminism, a name for incomplete knowledge, refers only to the sub-atomic world. Necromancy, witchcraft, and their lusty superstitious brood have been relegated to the chamber of man-made horrors. Men draw deep breaths of content in a universal order of certainty.

Moreover, the declaration of a man, however eminent, must now be backed up with evidence, before being accepted. However hoary the tradition may be, it has no

claim upon men's acceptance unless it is willing to be subjected to intelligent tests and examinations. In that respect Aristotle and the modern beginner in science are placed upon the same plane.

It was a great day for humanity, more than three hundred years ago, when Galileo dropped stones of different sizes from the leaning tower of Pisa, Italy. When they reached the ground at the same time, large and small, the Aristotelian doctrine that a heavy stone would reach the ground first was shattered into bits. But at the same moment freedom of thought and study was enlarged. Since that day, unfortified authority has been in disrespect. New courage has entered the thinking of men.

The material universe is under the reign of law. Every natural phenomenon is derived from the operation of law. We do not yet understand every law, but we are secure that law governs the multitudinous manifestations of nature. The stars in their courses, the planets in their paths, the molecules and the electrons in their positions—all move according to unvarying law. The life and growth of plant and beast and man obey constant law. Thunder and lightning, rain and sunshine are but expressions of existing never-varying law. In the light of such knowledge the universe may be trusted, and therefore is loved. It is upon this foundation that our civilization has come into being. Whenever, in our headstrong moments, we refuse to recognize and obey law, we move toward destruction. It is now understood that true freedom is won by obedience to law.

Men are convinced that the same truth holds in the spiritual universe. There, our knowledge is more limited. We cannot visualize this domain of nature so clearly. However, as far as we have penetrated the veil between the material and spiritual, the existence of law has been perceived. Every sound and great spiritual teacher has announced it. Jesus declared not only that "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," but He also said "If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself." This challenge sets up the experimental testing

of truth as justifiable in the spiritual as in the material domain.

Wherever we turn, we discover an orderly universe, recognized by its constancy of phenomena under like conditions. Without such certainty, there could be no real joy in living upon earth.

In view of this knowledge it would be a sad reflection on man's intelligence, if he did not arrange his own life, individually and collectively, in an orderly manner. A lawless community, as a lawless universe, serves but to destroy human happiness. This has been recognized to some degree by all peoples. Consequently, from the beginning of human history, governments have been set up for the guidance and security of the people. The more perfect the governmental laws and their application to the people, the more prosperous the nation has become. Obedience to such community laws are necessary for the welfare of the group, just as obedience to physical laws prospers the people.

It follows, therefore, of necessity, that the Church, which is a society built upon the existence and recognition of law, must support every orderly government set up for the security of humanity. Moreover, since human governments employ officers to carry out the laws, the Church yields, as a body of citizens, full respect to those who are charged with the enforcement of law. As citizens, the members of the Church are strictly law-abiding. The Church believes in honoring and sustaining the law and its officers, in any country in which it is operating. It could not be otherwise, for the whole Gospel structure is made up of laws for man's benefit.

It may in all fairness be asked, however, if the Church should yield obedience to all differing man-made governments. The answer is given in the revelations to the Prophet Joseph Smith:

> And now, verily I say unto you concerning the laws of the land, it is my will that my people should observe to do all things whatsoever I command them. And that law of the land which is constitutional, supporting that principle of freedom in maintaining rights and privileges, belongs to all mankind, and is justifiable before me. Therefore, I, the Lord, justify you, and your brethren of my church, in befriending

that law which is the constitutional law of the land; and as pertaining to law of man, whatsoever is more or less than this cometh of evil. (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 98:4, 5, 6.)

There lies in this principle a spirit of trust in the people, which is characteristic of the Church. The very name of the Church implies cooperation between the Lord and the people. After all, it is a fundamental Gospel doctrine that men, with God's aid, must move themselves on to salvation. Men must be trusted; if they fail, it is to their own detriment. In the Church, the power of nomination remains with the officers of the Church, but the people may accept or reject the persons nominated. This arrangement preserves popular participation in the government, and at the same time removes the evils of competition for office. It would be difficult to introduce political methods into the government of the Church.

In fine, then, Latter-day Saints, wherever they are, should be amenable to the laws of the land in which they live. If it is an unconstitutional form of government, they would naturally have the right to advocate by proper means a better government for the benefit of the people.

However, men who attain office are not always honorable in the execution of their duties. Members of the Church should first of all keep in mind the characters of the persons to whom they give public office. This also is made very clear in the revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith:

Nevertheless, when the wicked rule the people mourn. Wherefore, honest men and wise men should be sought for diligently, and good men and wise men ye should observe to uphold; otherwise whatsoever is less than these cometh of evil. (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 98:9, 10.)

It is the duty of the people to remove corrupt officers from office.

Latter-day Saints hold to the doctrine that political governments have no right to interfere with religious beliefs and practices, so long as others are not deprived of their legal right. This is well set forth in Section 134 of the Doctrine and Covenants which is the Church's declaration of belief regarding governments and laws in general.

We believe that religion is instituted of God; and that men are amenable to him, and to him only, for the exercise of it, unless their religious opinions prompt them to infringe upon the rights and liberties of others; but we do not believe that human law has a right to interfere in prescribing rules of worship to bind the consciences of men, nor dictate forms for public or private devotion; that the civil magistrate should restrain crime, but never control conscience; should punish guilt, but never suppress the freedom of the soul. . . . We do not believe it just to mingle religious influence with civil government, whereby one religious society is fostered and another proscribed in its spiritual privileges, and the individual rights of its members, as citizens, denied. We believe that all religious societies have a right to deal with their members for disorderly conduct, according to the rules and regulations of such societies; provided that such dealings be for fellowship and good standing; but we do not believe that any religious society has authority to try men on the right of property or life, to take from them this world's goods, or to put them in jeopardy of either life or limb, or to inflict any physical punishment upon them. They can only excommunicate them from their society, and withdraw from them their fellowship. (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 134:4, 9, 10.)

Such a statement is in full harmony with the doctrine that men must be obedient to the constitutional laws of the land. Lawmakers are under strict limitations. They may not attempt to legislate beyond the domain of accepted human government.

The recognition of law, temporal and spiritual, and obedience to it, are basic truths and tenets of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is the only way to freedom—and the Latter-day Saints must be a free people. The Lord has spoken it:

I, the Lord God, make you free, therefore ye are free indeed; and the law also maketh you free. (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 98:8.)

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **Distinguish among natural law, civil law and divine law.**
2. **What is the meaning of a "constitution" in human governments?**
3. **By what divine device is politics eliminated from appointments to Church offices?**
4. **Why is law the way to freedom?**
5. **Why should every man test truth for himself?**
6. **What do you think is the law of laws?**

CHAPTER 14

THE ACCEPTANCE OF ALL TRUTH

(Read the Thirteenth Article of Faith)

EVERY doctrine and practice of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as understood by the Latter-day Saints, may be summarized in one word—*Truth*. The definition of this mighty word is found in latter-day revelations: "Truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were and as they are to come." The most comprehensive description of God Himself is that He is a "God of truth."

Truth is the most sacred word of the Church. It is the beginning and the end of the divine plan of salvation for mankind. It "abides forever." By the acceptance of truth man may rise to divine likeness; by refusing truth he falls to the depths of evil. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." To exchange error for truth is the call of Mormonism. The greatness of any system devised for human good may be measured by the truth that it possesses.

It was in search of truth that Joseph Smith went into the woods to pray, and there received his first glorious vision—historically, the first event in the latter-day restoration of the Gospel. Every person who, since that time, has garnered faith in the restored Church of God has gone out to find truth, and has received a witness of the truth, sufficient to know, without doubt, that the Church of Christ has been restored in this day with knowledge, authority, and power to bring joy to mankind.

Joseph Smith, as all his successors in office, rested his ministry upon the possession of truth. When for example, James Arlington Bennett, in the trying Nauvoo days of 1843, wrote a sympathetic letter offering himself as the Prophet's "right-hand man," a ringing reply was sent, in which the Prophet declares: "I combat the errors of ages; I meet the violence of mobs; I cope with illegal proceedings from executive authority; I cut the gordian knot of powers, and I solve mathematical problems of the universities, *with truth—diamond truth; and God is my 'right-hand man.'* "

Likewise, Brigham Young on innumerable occasions

declared truth to be the foundation, superstructure, and covering of the Church, as in the following: "Our religion is simply truth. It is all said in this expression—it embraces all truth, wherever found, in all the works of God and man that are visible or invisible to the mortal eye."

Every truth is comprehended in the divine plan of salvation. Every fact of science or principle of conduct has a place in the Gospel system. There is no exception. Truth cannot be classified as of different orders, since all truths together form the great truth. The disciples of man occupy fields usually well circumscribed, such as chemistry, geology, anthropology, and other sciences, which touch one another lightly. Nevertheless, all truth is won in essentially the same manner—by man's use of his natural endowments, the common faculties of all men. This is recognized in philosophy which attempts to cover all knowledge. All knowledge is drawn by man out of the inexhaustible fountain of truth. The plan of salvation, coming out of the unseen world, uses all knowledge as tools for the accomplishment of its purposes. The Gospel rises above every man-made division of truth, for it embraces, frankly, all truth, and places every fact in its relationship to the whole system of truth.

Truth does not come unbidden. It must be desired, sought for, toiled for. It comes as a reward of effort. Joseph Smith desired truth, therefore sought out the place for prayer, in which he received his first heavenly manifestation. There he also fought off bravely the powers of darkness. His true followers, every one, have desired truth before finding it. They sought it earnestly and were willing to pay the price for it in work of sacrifice. Truth becomes priceless only to those whose strong desire and earnest effort have given the right to claim it.

Moreover, it is not enough to find truth today, it must be sought for tomorrow. There must be daily accessions to our store of knowledge. Really, to know the Gospel, which embraces all truth, we must be steadily, endlessly, engaged in acquiring knowledge, in securing truth and in using it in life. The search for truth must become the most vital issue of human life. In fact, to live the Gospel really

means to be constantly engaged in the search and practice of truth. One must grow and increase in truth.

There must be also a readiness on the part of every seeker to accept truth when found. That seems sometimes exceedingly difficult. There must be no resistance because truth clashes with our traditions or established opinions. Courage must be found to accept and cherish truth though it sever human ties, break friendships, or lead to persecution. If truth has any value, it is worth any price it may require for its possession. One is not a truth-seeker who is not ready at all times to accept and practice new, accredited truth. Whoever is ready for truth, at any cost, finds a recompense, a joy in life obtainable in no other way.

However, truth must come fully accredited. That which man accepts as truth must conform with all the specifications of truth. Doubt must not accompany the acceptance of truth. Above all, there must be no compromise with error. Every error must courageously be thrown overboard. In the words of Brigham Young, "I will trade all the errors in the world for one truth." That is an obligation placed upon those who would claim the blessings that flow from the search for truth.

Truth, as distinguished from error, is readily recognized. Truth comes in light; never in darkness. Truth is plain to the mind; it represents intelligence. That which mystifies or is vague is error. Truth benefits man, now and permanently. That which is opposed to goodness or morality, which appeals to momentary pleasure, is opposed to truth and is error. One who really loves truth need never be deceived by error. The final test is always available: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself."

The possession of truth implies the use of it, else man does not conform to the Gospel plan. Unused truth may be ornamental, but of no real value. Use makes truth alive. Therefore, activity in the Church is enjoined upon all members. Honesty, chastity, benevolence, service must be made positive virtues if they are to help build human lives. Men must be eagerly "engaged in a good cause," that is, a cause of truth, to be acceptable Latter-day Saints. In the kingdom of God on earth, drones have no place. It is

not enough to seek truth; men must engage error in battle and vanquish it. It is not enough to possess truth; it must be used as a weapon with which to accomplish the purposes of the Lord. Whoever seeks truth, finds it, and uses it, enters into partnership with the Lord in perfecting himself and his fellow men. That is the only way to certain happiness. For that reason, Latter-day Saints hope and endure, seek after virtue, after all things of good report and praiseworthy. All these then will be used in working out the eternal plan for man's joy.

What is the lovely life? How may it be distinguished from other lives? The answer is simple enough. A life earnestly, eagerly desiring truth and seeking it, becomes attractive to others. A life that battles against error and its brood of evil, commands our admiration. A life that, having found truth, accepts it and uses it, becomes clothed in beauty. Truth-seeking, truth-living lives are the loveliest creations of God. They who so live find an exquisite joy in life; they bless humanity by their labors; they are the true leaders of mankind. Unsung or famous, such lives transform the world for good. It is for such lives that the Lord has reserved the gift of eternal exaltation. It must be so, for truth includes all knowledge, virtue, and goodness; and they who find and use truth have knowledge, are virtuous and good. They are a power for good, which covers the earth as the gentle rays of the sun.

The Articles of Faith do not pretend to be a full exposition of Gospel Doctrine. At the best they but sketch the leading principles of the restored Church of Christ. Therefore the last Article of Faith points out the all-inclusiveness of the Gospel in terms of truth.

Yet, throughout these Articles of Faith runs one thread of thought upon which all doctrine has been threaded: That the Lord in these latter days has restored the Gospel in its purity, possessed of divine authority, never again to be cast down or given to another people; that those who accept the Gospel and live it, shall find exaltation in the kingdom of God; that these are the last days, in which the Lord will come again to rule His people and to bring about the consummation of the Father's plan for human salvation.

Joseph Smith by direct appeal to the Lord secured witness of the truth of the Gospel and became an instrument in carrying out the divine purpose among men. So every man may make an appeal to the Lord of Heaven with the assurance that the truth will become manifest. But, as with Joseph Smith, so with every other man, the request for divine favor must be uttered without doubt as to the reality of God and His power to speak to man, and with a will ready to obey the divine mandate.

Joseph Smith had his great first vision. He came out of the sacred grove with the certain knowledge that God lives and cares for His children. Every man may in like manner acquire such knowledge. The Lord may not come in person with the message of truth, but by the Holy Spirit man may know with certainty the truth of the restored Gospel.

Every person on earth should repeat Joseph Smith's approach to God, in faith and humility. Every one should seek to know for himself that the glorious doctrine of the Gospel, as partly set forth in the Articles of Faith, is of God. Everyone may have by earnest desire and effort, his own first vision of truth as the Lord may deign to reveal it. Well may we pity the man who does not know for himself that the Gospel is true.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **What is the meaning of truth?**
2. **What do you love more than truth?**
3. **When is truth useful to man?**
4. **How may the history of mankind be read in terms of man's honest search for truth?**
5. **What is the effect of truth upon the person who seeks and obeys it?**
6. **What is the relationship between truth and happiness?**

II

Some Current Gospel Questions

CHAPTER 15

DOES THE CHURCH NOW RECEIVE REVELATION AS IT DID IN THE DAYS OF JOSEPH SMITH?

THE answer to this question is a simple "yes." The Church of Christ is guided by continuous revelation. The Lord speaks to His Church now as in the time of the Prophet Joseph Smith, or in ages past, whenever the Church has been upon earth.

The question merits, however, a fuller answer.

There are at least three classes of revelations:

First, there are revelations dealing with the organization and basic doctrine of the Church. Such revelations form the foundation of the Church, upon which is built the superstructure of teaching and practice throughout the years. These revelations are necessary at the beginning of a dispensation, so that the Church may be properly organized and sent upon its way to bless mankind. In this age, these indispensable revelations were given to Joseph Smith who was commissioned to effect the organization of the restored Church. As given to the Prophet, they suffice for the salvation of man in this dispensation. Other such fundamental revelations dealing with organization and doctrine may, at the pleasure of the Lord, be given, for there is a universe of truth not yet known to us, but they will in no way change or abrogate the principles set forth in existing revelations.

Second, there are revelations dealing with the problems of the day. Though the essential doctrine, forming the foundation, framework, and structure of the Gospel, has been revealed, the Church, directed by mortal men, needs divine guidance in the solution of current questions. Many of the revelations received by the Prophet Joseph Smith were of this character. There were missions to organize, cities to be built, men to be called into office, temples, meetinghouses, and homes to be constructed. The Prophet presented his problems to the Lord, and with the revealed answer was able to accomplish properly the work before him. It is comforting to know that our Heavenly

Father helps in the minor as in the major affairs of life. The revelations directing the building of certain houses in the early days of the Church, are, for example, among the cherished words of God, for they throw a flood of light upon the precious, intimate relationships that may be established between God and man.

Such revelations, directing the Church in the affairs of the day, have been received continuously by the Church, through the President of the Church. One needs only review the history of the Saints to assure himself that such revelations have constantly been vouchsafed the Church. Perhaps more of this type of revelation has been received since, than during the time of the Prophet. Because they are not printed in a book as revelations does not diminish their verity.

Third, every faithful member of the Church may be granted revelation for his daily guidance. In fact, the members of the Church can testify that they in truth have and do receive such daily guidance. The testimony of the truth of the Gospel, the precious possession of hundreds of thousands, has come through the spirit of revelation. By desire, study, practice, and prayer, one must approach the testimony of the truth, but it is obtained finally only under the spirit of revelation. It is by this power that the eyes of men are opened to understand the principles and the truth of the Gospel. Without that spirit, truth cannot be comprehended. In the words of President Brigham Young:

> Without revelation direct from heaven, it is impossible for any person to understand fully the plan of salvation. We often hear it said that the living oracles must be in the Church, in order that the Kingdom of God may be established and prosper on the earth. I will give another version of this sentiment. I say that the living oracles of God, or the Spirit of revelation, must be in each and every individual, to know the plan of salvation and keep in the path that leads them to the presence of God. (*Brigham Young's Discourses,* p. 58.)

We may go further. Every person born into the earth has claim upon the assistance of the spirit of God. That is a species of revelation. Consequently, all good achievements of man, in science, literature, or art, are the

product of revelation. The knowledge and wisdom of earth have so come.

It must be remembered that revelations usually come as needed, no faster. The Prophet Joseph Smith made this clear: "We cannot expect to know all, or more than we now know, unless we comply with or keep those we already have received." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith,* p. 256.) The question then should not be "Do we receive revelations now as in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith?" but rather, "Do we keep so fully the revelations already given us that we have the right to expect more?"

Another important principle of revelation in the organized Church of Christ is the limitation placed upon those who secure revelations. Every member of the Church may seek and receive revelation, but only for himself and those for whom he is responsible. Every officer of the Church is entitled to revelation to help him in the field into which he has been called, but not beyond. The bishop can claim no revelation except for his ward duties, the stake president for his stake duties only; the President of the Church is the only person who can receive revelations for the guidance of the Church as a whole. These limitations, coming from the Lord, protect the orderliness of the Kingdom of God on earth.

It is not the business of any individual to rise up as a revelator, as a prophet, as a seer, as an inspired man, to give revelation for the guidance of the Church, or to assume to dictate to the presiding authorities of the Church in any part of the world, much less in the midst of Zion, where the organizations of the Priesthood are about perfect, where everything is complete, even to the organization of a branch. It is the right of individuals to be inspired and to receive manifestations of the Holy Spirit for their personal guidance to strengthen their faith, and to encourage them in works of righteousness, in being faithful and observing and keeping the commandments which God has given unto them; it is the privilege of every man and woman to receive revelation to this end, but no further. The moment an individual rises up assuming the right to control and to dictate, or to sit in judgment on his brethren, especially upon those who preside, he should be promptly checked, or discord, division, and confusion will be the result. Every man and woman in this Church should know better than to yield to such a spirit; the moment that such a feeling presents itself to them they should rebuke it, as it is in direct antagonism to the order of the Priesthood, and to the spirit and genius of this work. We can accept nothing as authoritative but that which comes directly through the appointed channel, the con-

stituted organizations of the Priesthood, which is the channel that God has appointed through which to make known his mind and will to the world. (President Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine,* p. 51, 52.)

All faithful Latter-day Saints have the assurance that the Church is led today as in earlier years by revelation from God. The history of the Church furnishes to all who will look for it ample evidence of the fact of continuous revelation within the Church.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **What is the first recorded revelation on earth?**
2. **What connections can be traced between revelation and human history?**
3. **Why does revelation need to be continuous?**
4. **In what sense may all discovery of truth be said to be a revelation?**
5. **How may the genuineness of revelation be tested?**
6. **Why is the President of the Church the only person who can receive revelations for the Church?**

CHAPTER 16

DOES THE PAYMENT OF TITHING CAUSE ECONOMIC DISTRESS?

"NO," would be the unanimous and emphatic answer of those who have obeyed the law of tithing. Indeed, the question is usually asked by non-tithepayers who seek to find weaknesses in the Church.

When mortal man places one-tenth of his income in the treasury of the Lord, he acknowledges by that act that all his earthly income is a gift from the Lord, the real Owner and Master of Earth. The giving of tithing becomes then an evidence of the man's faith in God and of the man's conquest of his selfish self. This is the essence of the law of tithing.

The law of tithing is on a par, in every respect, with every other commandment of the Lord. Obedience to His commandments is required by the Lord. "For this cause I have sent you—that you might be obedient." (Doc. and Cov. 58:6.) In fact, disobedience is an offense to the Lord. "In nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments." (Doc and Cov. 59:21.)

The great purpose of life is to develop such conquest over self that obedience may be willingly, easily, and gladly yielded to every commandment issuing from the mouth of the Lord. Commandments then become means by which a man's spiritual condition may be determined. Every person may be, in a sense, the judge of his own spiritual progress, for he knows how readily he yields obedience to the laws of the Lord. The commandments of first value are those which demand most unselfish action; that lead, if obeyed, to the greatest self-conquest.

Tithing is a law of special value for this purpose. Man naturally is slow to part with his worldly goods. Too often spiritual wealth is overshadowed by material possessions. If he can so master himself as to part with a tenth of his earthly income, he has won victory over one of the most stubborn phases of his nature.

While self-conquest may be the chief result of man's obedience to law, other blessings follow. Man gives little; the Lord gives much in return even here on earth. Those who are obedient to law will gain knowledge and intelligence. They may escape the scourges and afflictions of the world (Doc. and Cov. 97:25-28); health, endurance, wisdom, and hidden treasures of knowledge shall be theirs. (Doc. and Cov. 89:18-21.) The joys and blessings of heaven shall be tasted by them on earth. (Doc. and Cov. 105:18.)

Obedience to the law of tithing is certain to bring blessings in return, even of a temporal character. Yet, it must ever be remembered that the blessings of life come according to the Lord's will. Material property may not be the blessing we most need. If we can trust the Lord enough to pay Him a tenth of our increase, we must trust Him to bless us according to our needs. Material, earthly property does not have the same value before God as before man. Love of property is often nothing more than covetousness, which is a deadly sin. "What is property unto me? saith the Lord." (Doc. and Cov. 117:4.) Let man do his best to provide for himself and his family, gather property around him, pay his tithing, obey all other laws of God, and accept, with joy, such blessings as the Lord may vouchsafe him.

Now, after all this has been said, it is interesting to note that the very great majority of tithepayers, perhaps all, succeed in finding sufficient for their temporal welfare. The group of tithepayers within the Church are not only more spiritually active, but generally they are more prosperous than the non-tithepaying group. Tithing is not a factor that works against economic prosperity. In most cases material as well as spiritual blessings follow obedience to the law of tithing.

This view is confirmed by a recent investigation by a non-Mormon agency. A governmental bank, having loaned very large sums to Utah farmers, mostly Latter-day Saints, and noting an abnormally high percentage of delinquency, wondered if the practice of tithepaying were reducing the ability of the farmers to make proper repayments. The assistance of the Utah State Agricultural Col-

lege was secured in carrying on the investigation. The Church gave full cooperation.

The first study was made in Utah County, Utah. Four hundred and eighty-five names were submitted by the bank and college. Of these, seventy-one could not be found on the records of the Church. Of the remaining four hundred and fourteen persons, seventy-eight had no indebtedness, two hundred and twenty-nine had loans, but were non-delinquent, and one hundred and seven were delinquent.

The percentage of total tithepayers was about the same in the three groups, but the proportion of full tithepayers among the delinquent group was only a little more than half of the full tithepayers in the non-delinquent and no-debt classes. The total amount paid in tithing per person in the delinquent group was only about three-fourths of that paid by the non-delinquent and no debt groups. Examined from every angle, the investigation showed that tithing had no depressing economic influence, but rather that the qualities in a man that led him to pay tithing, also enabled him to win more success in his economic life.

It should be added that two of the four hundred and eighty-five farmers listed kept three missionaries in the field, and these two men were in the non-delinquent group and paid a full tithing. Neither tithing nor missionary costs seemed to have a depressing effect upon the economic welfare of the farmers. The gift of amassing money beyond ordinary needs is much like any other special gift such as in music, art, education, etc.

Another, smaller investigation was conducted by the same agencies in Cache County, Utah. In the section studied one hundred ninety farmers were owing money to the bank. Thirty-three of them were delinquent and these had farms of equal size and productive power with the non-delinquent farmers. The Church records showed that of these thirty-three delinquents, eighteen paid no tithing, eight paid part tithing, and seven paid a full tithing. The investigator calculated that in one of the prosperous villages in the Cache County study about 11 per cent of the farmers are delinquent in their bank payments, and these 11 % pay 2 % of the tithing in the village. It seemed clear

therefore that in this as in the Utah County area, tithing is a very unimportant factor in the delinquency problem. Here also it seems evident that the man who pays tithing has power to do the things that bring reasonable economic prosperity.

As far as available experience can guide us, the answer to the question at the head of this writing is, "No." The payment of tithing does not cause economic distress. A host of testimonies might be secured of the joy in life that follows obedience to this important law of the Lord.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **What does it mean to surrender to truth?**
2. **How is the principle of giving related to that of receiving?**
3. **What is the spiritual meaning of tithing?**
4. **What is the real foundation of wealth?**
5. **What is faith?**
6. **Assemble stories of the effects of tithe paying.**

CHAPTER 17

DOES THE CHURCH HAVE A MONOPOLY ON TRUTH?

SUCH a question reflects a complete misapprehension of the claims of the restored Church of Christ.

A monopoly of truth would mean the possession of all available truth, and the exclusion of those not in the Church from participation in the possession or benefits of truth.

Nothing could be farther from the teachings of the Church. It has been taught from the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith that the light of truth enlightens every man born into the earth. All who seek truth may find it, whether in or out of the Church. Those who seek earnestly for truth in libraries, laboratories or open nature will be rewarded from the inexhaustible fountain of truth. The author of truth is generous. The Church urges that in every clime, by all men, at all times, the search for truth be continued; for as truth increases among men, human joys may increase.

However, there are many kinds of truth. Some truths concern themselves with the physical laws determining the conditions of earth and the heavens, and by which things move and operate. That is valuable knowledge, which has given humanity many of its material and intellectual blessings. The discovery of such truths has called into being our present civilization which speaks with the stars and gives light and comfort to the humblest home.

There are higher kinds of truth—such as pertain to human conduct, that is, to man's manner of using the gifts of knowledge that have come to him; truths that concern the God of heaven and man's relationship to his divine Father; truths that explain the mystery of the past, reveal the purpose of the present, and foretell the future destiny of man; truths that enable man, if he but use them, to approach, forever, the likeness of God.

This latter kind of truth forms the Plan of Salvation as set forth in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel is a product of the mind and will of the Lord. It

teaches that a divine purpose runs through the universe, encompassing every fact, law and principle, and enlivening all the works of God. Thus the Gospel in its fullness becomes the structure or house of truth, into which all truth may be fitted. As the home of truth, the Gospel claims all truth, and places all truth in its proper place and position with respect to the present and future welfare of man.

The truths of the Gospel, as all other truth, are available to all mankind. Indeed, perhaps all men possess a part of this basic knowledge for their great comfort. Certainly in every church professing God there is some of this higher truth. That is the doctrine of the Latter-day Saints. However, the Gospel is operated on earth under the authority of the Lord. He placed man on earth, and gave him the Gospel. He has watched over the children of men throughout the ages of time and reestablished His Church from time to time as the apostasy of man made it necessary. To the care of the Church the Gospel has been committed with His authority, called the Priesthood. Only the Church possessing this authority is the complete Church of Christ, and there can be but one.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints possesses the truth relative to the true Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one divine plan of salvation, and the authority to officiate in God's name in the upbuilding of the Church of Christ. There is but one Gospel; there can be but one Priesthood; there is but one Church which encompasses the whole truth of the Gospel. In that sense only, does the Church claim to possess the full fundamental truth, call it monopoly if you choose, necessary for full salvation in the celestial kingdom of God. This the Church does humbly and gratefully. Keenly sensible of its high commission and vast responsibility to lead all mankind into a fullness of the knowledge leading to eternal progression in the presence of the Lord.

WHY IS IT UNDESIRABLE TO JOIN SECRET SOCIETIES?

THE Church ever operates in full light. There is no secrecy about its doctrine, aims or work. It is open to all men who will conform to its requirements. Access to the Temples, where the most sacred ordinances are performed may be had by every member of the Church who lives the honorable life expected of faithful Latter-day Saints. No promise is exacted of any Church member except to live as nearly as may be in conformity with the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. The work of the Church, in all departments, is sacred not secret.

This point of view makes it difficult for Latter-day Saints to look with favor upon secret, oath-bound societies. It goes without saying that members of the Church would not join such an organization, should it be antagonistic to the Church. Nor, would it be attractive should it be of such a nature as to cause loss of interest in Church duties and activities.

The words of the Prophet Joseph Smith is a sufficient answer to the question: (Note especially the last sentence.)

> And again, I would further suggest the impropriety of the organization of bands or companies, by covenant or oaths, by penalties or secrecies; but let the time past of our experience and sufferings by the wickedness of Doctor Avard suffice and let our covenant be that of the Everlasting Covenant, as is contained in the Holy Writ and the things that God hath revealed unto us. Pure friendship always becomes weakened the very moment you undertake to make it stronger by penal oaths and secrecy.

Finally, let it be remembered that authorized organizations of the Church for social and fraternal purposes, coupled with our professional and business organizations. will not only serve our needs, but will consume all the time that we can spare in these busy times. Divided allegiance is always unsatisfactory and often dangerous.

IN THE EVENT OF THE DEATH OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH, THE COUNCIL OF TWELVE APOSTLES TAKES OVER THE PRESIDENCY OF THE CHURCH. DOES THIS COUNCIL POSSESS THE NECESSARY POWER? CAN THIS PRACTICE BE CONFIRMED BY REVELATION?

THE answer to both questions is yes.

The Twelve Apostles "form a quorum, equal in authority and power" to the First Presidency. (Doctrine and Covenants 107:23, 24.)

This doctrine was amplified in a revelation concerning the Twelve Apostles:

"For unto you, the Twelve, and those, the First Presidency, who are appointed with you to be your counselors and your leaders, is the power of this priesthood given, for the last days and for the last time, in the which is the dispensation of the fulness of times. Which power you hold, in connection with all those who have received a dispensation at any time from the beginning of the creation; for verily I say unto you, the keys of the dispensation, which ye have received, have come down from the fathers, and last of all, being sent down from heaven unto you." (Doctrine and Covenants 112:30-32.)

This authority of the quorum of the Twelve Apostles was frequently referred to by the Prophet Joseph Smith. He said: "I next proceeded to explain the duty of the Twelve, and their authority which is next to the present presidency. (*Documentary History of the Church,* 2:373.) Later he said: "The time had come when the Twelve should be called upon to stand in their place next to the First Presidency." (*Times and Seasons,* 2:521.) He also said to the Twelve Apostles: "Now, if they kill me, you have all the keys, and all the ordinances, and you can confer them upon others, and the hosts of Satan will not be able to tear down the Kingdom as fast as you will be able to build it up; and upon your shoulders will the responsibility of leading this people rest." (*Times and Seasons,* 5:651.)

The Counselors in the Presidency lose their presiding authority when the President of the Church dies. In the

words of the Prophet: "The Twelve are not subject to any other than the First Presidency, and where I am not, there is no First Presidency over the Twelve." (*Documentary History of the Church,* 2:374.)

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **In what sense is truth the foundation of the Gospel?**
2. **What kind of truth characterizes the Gospel?**
3. **Distinguish between scientific and moral truth.**
4. **What is the real objective of man's search for truth?**
5. **Explain why Joseph Smith's First Vision came in great light.**
6. **What is the greatest bond of brotherhood among men?**
7. **Where does the authority of the Council of Twelve Apostles have its root?**
8. **How old is the Apostleship?**

CHAPTER 18

WHERE ARE THE LOST TRIBES OF ISRAEL?

IN THE field of historical speculation, few themes have been more assiduously theorized about than the location of the lost tribes of Israel. The voluminous literature concerning the subject, "proves" that the tribes may be in any land under the sun, according to the theory accepted. In our Church, several books on the subject, presenting differing views, have been written by thoughtful, honest men. Fortunately, so far as human happiness here or hereafter is concerned, it matters not a whit where they are located. Unfortunately, some brethren have entangled the subject with the theology of the Gospel to their own discomfiture.

Throughout its long history as one nation, the Hebrews had been in almost continuous warfare with neighboring people; and indeed the people of the valley of the Euphrates on the east, and of Egypt on the south and west, mighty nations, had paid their warlike respects to the children of Abraham. Wars and warfare form a large part of the history of united Israel. Only under David and Solomon was the kingdom made into an empire strong enough to dictate terms to weaker neighbors and engender wholesome respect among larger powers.

After the death of Solomon, the divided kingdoms, divided also in strength, were subject to similar warfare. Invasion followed invasion; the larger powers to the East, viewing Palestine as a strategically important corridor to Egypt, descended, with powerful armies upon the now petty kingdoms. The southern kingdom of Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel became little more than vassals to Babylonian powers.

Following the practice of the times, the victors carried large numbers of the vanquished people into captivity, to serve as slaves, craftsmen, builders, or even statesmen, according to their gifts and talents. There were many such captivities from among the people of Israel.

The captivity connected with the lost tribes is mentioned in 2 Kings 17:6—"In the ninth year of Hoshea the King of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away

into Assyria, and settled them in Khalah and on the Khabur, a river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes." A similar statement is made in 1 Chronicles 5:26. That is all we hear of them. From that time they are literally "lost" to history, except for a passage in the Apocrypha, II Esdras, 13:40-47:

> Those are the ten tribes, which were carried away prisoners out of their own land, in the time of Osea the King, whom Salmanasar the King of Assyria led away captive, and he carried them over the waters, and so came they into another land. But they took this counsel among themselves, that they would leave the multitude of the heathen, and go forth into a further country, where never mankind dwelt, that they might there keep statutes, which they never kept in their own land. And they entered into Euphrates by the narrow passages of the river. For the Most High then showed signs for them, and held still the flood, till they were passed over. For through that country there was a great way to go, namely of a year and a half: and the same region is called Arsareth. Then they dwelt there until the latter time; and now when they shall begin to come, the Highest shall stay the springs of the stream again, that they may go through.

Many fantastic theories have been set up concerning the location of the lost tribes. One declares, for example, that in the northern countries are vast subterranean caverns in which the lost tribes live and prosper, awaiting the day of their return. Another, by diagram and argument suggests that a secondary small planet is attached at the north pole, to the earth by a narrow neck, and that the lost tribes live there. (See Dalton, *The Key to This Earth.*) Others, even more unacceptable are in circulation.

The view most commonly held by members of the Church is that a body of Israelites are actually living in some unknown place on earth, probably in the north. In support of this opinion are the common knowledge that the earth is not yet fully explored, and numerous scriptural references to a gathering of Israel from the north countries. Jeremiah speaks of the house of Israel coming "out of the north country." (Jeremiah 3:18; 23:8; 31:8-11; Hosea 1:11.) In the Book of Mormon, also, there are references to Israel coming out of the north in the latter days. Ether prophesies of those "who were scattered and gathered in from the four quarters of the earth, and from the north countries." In modern revelation the north countries are

mentioned in connection with the restoration of the ten tribes. "They who are in the north countries shall come in remembrance before the Lord, and their prophets shall hear His voice, and shall no longer stay themselves, and they shall smite the rocks, and the ice shall flow down at their presence." (Doc. and Cov. 133:26-34.) Moreover, in the Kirtland Temple, Moses appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and "committed unto us the keys of . . . the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north." (Doc. and Cov. 110:11.)

Another view held by many is that the lost tribes are in the northern part of the earth, thus fulfilling that scriptural requirement, but not necessarily in one body. In support are quoted the many references in the scripture to the gathering of Israel from the four corners of the earth and the isles of the sea. Further than that, while north countries are mentioned, nowhere is it specifically stated that the lost tribes are in one body apart from other peoples. It is contended that the wandering tribes actually settled in northern Europe and Asia, and throughout the centuries mingled with the people there, until the blood of Israel runs strong among the northern peoples. Thus is explained the relatively ready acceptance of the Gospel by the British, Scandinavian, and German peoples. Those who hold this view feel that prophecy has been literally fulfilled by the gathering of Latter-day Saints from Northern Europe to the Church in Western America. The notable British-Israel movement is built upon such a dispersion of the lost tribes. (See Stephen Malan, *The Ten Tribes.*)

A third view attempts to reconcile the two preceding ones. We are reminded that historically and prophetically it is well known that Israel has been scattered among the nations. By removal from the Holy Land through successive captivities, and voluntary migrations, often due to persecution, and by intermarriage with other races, the blood of Israel is now found in almost every land and among every people. The ancient writers spoke of "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad." It is suggested that on the northward march of the lost tribes, many fell from the company, remained at various points of the journey, there became mixed with the people living there, until

today, along the line of the exodus, the blood of Israel may be found. It is further suggested that a part of the ten tribes may be somewhere in seclusion, but also that their blood may be among the nations through which they passed on their long migration, thousands of miles if they reached the arctic regions. (See George Reynolds, *Are We of Israel?* Also, Allen H. Godbey, *The Lost Tribes, a Myth.*)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believes in the restoration of the ten tribes; and that it is a part of the mission of the Church to gather scattered Israel into the fold of truth. It knows that throughout the ages, under the wise economy of the Lord, the blood of Israel, most susceptible to Gospel truth, has been mingled with all nations. The scattering of Israel is a frequent theme of writers of the Bible. So firm is this belief that the Latter-day Saints, for over a hundred years, at great sacrifices of money, energy, and life itself, have gone out over the earth to preach the restored Gospel, and bring all men into the House of Israel.

The question concerning the location of the lost tribes, of itself unimportant, is interesting in showing how such matters are allowed to occupy men's time and tempers, in a day that calls for helpful action among those who are within our reach. Time will reveal the whereabouts of the lost tribes. It is our concern to help fulfill the plan of God, by eager daily service.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **In your opinion what parts of the earth are yet unknown to civilized man?**
2. **How much of the Northern country do you think has been seen by recent arctic exploration?**
3. **How widely scattered among the nations is the blood of Israel?**
4. **What is your opinion of the frequent statement that the nations that have listened most to the Gospel are those possessing most of the blood of Ephraim?**
5. **How may a pure gentile become a child of Abraham?**
6. **To what extent are the Jews of today pure descendants of Judah?**

CHAPTER 19

WHAT ARE THE FACTS CONCERNING THE ADAM-GOD MYTH, SO FREQUENTLY MENTIONED BY ENEMIES OF THE CHURCH?

THOSE who peddle the well-worn Adam-God myth, usually charge the Latter-day Saints with believing that: 1. Our Father in Heaven, the Supreme God, to whom we pray, is Adam, the first man; and 2. Adam was the father of Jesus Christ. A long series of absurd and false deductions are made from these propositions.

Those who spread this untruth about the Latter-day Saints go back for authority to a sermon delivered by President Brigham Young "in the tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, April 9th, 1852", (*Journal of Discourses,* Volume 1, page 50.) Certain statements there made are confusing if read superficially, but very clear if read with their context. Enemies of President Brigham Young and of the Church have taken advantage of the opportunity and have used these statements repeatedly and widely to do injury to the reputation of President Young and the Mormon people. An honest reading of this sermon and of other reported discourses of President Brigham Young proves that the great second President of the Church held no such views as have been put into his mouth in the form of the Adam-God myth.

In the discourse, upon which hangs the Adam-God myth, President Brigham Young discussed the earthly origin of Jesus Christ. He denied that the Holy Ghost was the father of Jesus Christ; and affirmed that the Savior was begotten by God the Father. He explained that "Our Father in Heaven begat all the spirits that ever were or ever will be upon this earth; and they were born spirits in the eternal world. Then the Lord by His power and wisdom organized the mortal tabernacle of man." That is, every human being is in direct descent from God, the Father. In the course of his remarks President Young was led to discuss the high place of Adam among the generations of men, for Adam "helped to make and organize this world," and as first man, the father of us all, Adam stands at the head of the human race, and will ever be the repre-

sentative of his children, before our Father in Heaven, the Father of our spirits. It was in connection with this thought that the oft-quoted statement was made about Adam, that "he is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do."

He spoke of Adam as the great Patriarch of the human race, a personage who had been privileged and able to assist in the creation of the earth, who would continue his efforts in behalf of the human family, and through whom many of our needs would be met. All this was in contradiction to the common doctrine the world over that Adam was a great sinner, and not to be held in affectionate remembrance. Nowhere is it suggested that Adam is God, the Father, whose child Adam himself was. On the contrary, in the sermon of April 9th, 1852, itself, there is a clear distinction made between Adam and God the Father, in the following words: "The earth was organized by three distinct characters, namely Eloheim, Yahovah, and Michael"—the last previously defined as Adam. There can be no confusion in this passage of the separate personalities of these three great beings. A discourse delivered August 8, 1852, within four months of the discourse in controversy (*Journal of Discourses,* Vol. 3, page 94) contains the following: "The Lord sent forth His Gospel to the people; He said, I will give it to my son Adam, from whom Methuselah received it; and Noah received it from Methuselah; and Melchizedek administered to Abraham." Clearly, President Young here distinguishes between God, the Father, and Adam, the first man.

The sermon of April 9, 1852, also makes the statement that, "Jesus, our Elder Brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the Garden of Eden, and who is our Father in Heaven." The dishonest inference has been drawn and advertised widely that President Young meant that Adam was the earthly father of Jesus Christ. This deduction cannot be made fairly, in view of the context or of his other published utterances on the subject. Adam and Eve were not the only persons in the Garden of Eden, for "They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (Genesis, Chapter 3, verse 8). President Young undoubtedly had

this personage in mind, for he did not say Adam, but "our Father in Heaven."

In many discourses, President Young refers to Jesus as the Only Begotten of the Father, which would not have been true, had Adam been the earthly father of Jesus. At one time he declared (*Journal of Discourses,* Vol. 1, page 238) "I believe the Father came down from heaven, as the Apostles said he did, and begat the Savior of the World; for he is the Only Begotten of the Father, which could not be if the Father did not actually beget him in person." On another occasion (*Journal of Discourses,* Vol. 2, page 42) he said, "And what shall we say of our Heavenly Father? He is also a man in perfection, and the father of the man Jesus Christ, and the father of our spirits." It seems unnecessary to offer more evidence that Brigham Young held the accepted doctrine of the Church, that God, the Father, and not Adam, is the earthly father of Jesus.

In all this, President Young merely followed the established doctrine of the Church. Joseph Smith the Prophet, in discussing the Priesthood, touched upon the position of Adam.

> [The Priesthood] commencing with Adam, who was the first man, who is spoken of in Daniel as being the "Ancient of Days", or in other words, the first and oldest of all, the great, grand progenitor of whom it is said in another place he is Michael, because he was the first and father of all, not only by progeny, but the first to hold the spiritual blessings, to whom was made known the plan of ordinances for the salvation of his posterity unto the end, and to whom Christ was first revealed, and through whom Christ has been revealed from heaven, and will continue to be revealed from henceforth. Adam holds the keys of the dispensation of the fulness of times, i. e., the dispensation of all the times that have been and will be revealed through him from the beginning to Christ, and from Christ to the end of all the dispensations that are to be revealed. . . . This then is the nature of the Priesthood; every man holding the Presidency of his dispensation, and one man holding the Presidency of them all, even Adam. [*History of the Church,* Vol. 4, p. 207.]

On another occasion the Prophet Joseph Smith stated further::

> The Priesthood was first given to Adam; he obtained the First Presidency, and held the keys of it from generation to generation. He obtained it in the Creation, before the world was formed, as in Genesis 1:26, 27, 28. He had dominion given him over every living creature.

. . . Our Father Adam, Michael, will call his children together and prepare them for the coming of the Son of man. He (Adam) is the father of the human family, and presides over the spirits of all men, and all that have had the keys must stand before him in this grand council. . . . The Son of man stands before him, and there is given him glory and dominion. Adam delivers up his stewardship to Christ. (*History of the Church,* Vol. 3, p. 385.)

The perspective of years brings out the remarkable fact, that, though the enemies of the Latter-day Saints have had access, in printed form, to the hundreds of discourses of Brigham Young, only half a dozen statements have been useful to the calumniators of the founder of Utah. Of these, the sermon of April 9, 1852, which has been quoted most frequently, presents no errors of fact or doctrine, if read understandingly and honestly.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **What is the meaning of Patriarch?**
2. **Why will the perfected Kingdom of God be organized on a patriarchal pattern?**
3. **What reason have we for believing that Adam had been on earth before he entered the Garden of Eden?**
4. **What motive do you properly suspect when a person will argue a case from one sermon without reference to 399 others by the same speaker? (There are nearly 400 published sermons by Brigham Young.)**
5. **What estimate of character would you place upon men who do not fear to have their extemporaneous addresses published for all to read.**
6. **What did Job mean when he exclaimed, "Oh that mine adversary had written a book."**

CHAPTER 20

HOW DO YOU ACCOUNT FOR GOSPEL RESEMBLANCES IN NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS?

THE great world religions have much in common. Hinduism, Taoism, Zoroasterism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Mohammedanism hold to some tenets fundamental in Christianity. They all believe in an overruling power, God, in man's immortality in some form, and a divine plan for the guidance of man to happiness. All of them recognize that growth and progress come through self-effort, by self-control and self-discipline. The brotherhood of man, cooperation, and the golden rule, are generally accepted as obligatory upon all men. These doctrines are impressively similar to those of Christianity. (See H. M. Woodward, *Humanity's Greatest Need.*)

There is a like similarity, though not so marked, in the practices or ordinances of the religions of earth. For example, baptism, the initiatory Christian ordinance, is not peculiar to the Christian Church. In some form it is practiced by many non-Christian communities. In fact, the doctrine of entering through water into a new life is widespread. Moreover, a practice equivalent to baptism is very old. Among the Hebrews it was practiced long before the days of Christ. In ancient Egypt, a corresponding rite was in operation from days immemorial. Other gospel practices likewise appear in other non-Christian religions. (See, *Encyclopedia Britannica,* Art. Baptism.)

Even the substance of the Ten Commandments date back into far non-Christian antiquity, and among others than the Hebrew people. The Ten Commandments were given by God to Moses among the thunderings and lightnings on Mt. Sinai. Yet, in other forms their teachings were known by peoples who lived before the days of Moses. The code of Hammurabi, a contemporary of Abraham, contains injunctions for correct living resembling the Ten Commandments. (See R. F. Harper, *The Code of Hammurabi.*)

Such similarities might be multiplied if necessary. How may they be explained? It is a fair question.

In the large literature attempting to answer this question, two opposing answers or explanations appear.

The first, for the moment the fashionable one, sets up the theory of the independent development of such similarities in different lands and among different peoples. That is, religious beliefs and practices have arisen spontaneously and independently in various countries. The founders of the various great world religions originated, from the foundation, the respective bodies of laws and regulations and independently of other religions. The striking similarities that exist, despite the independent origin are explained by a "psychic unity" that leads men independently the one of the other, to arrive at the same destination." Some supporters of this theory speak of a "convergence" of human ideas towards the same conclusions. In short, the blind or chance operation of some mystic force, explains the similarities appearing in the religious systems of the world.

This explanation is not confined to religious beliefs and practices, but is extended to the general cultural history of mankind. In economic and social fields, in literature, art, mechanics, and crafts, remarkable similarities exist among various peoples the world over. All these, this theory declares, had an independent origin in different lands.

Similar myths, legends and folklore exist among all primitive peoples. The theory of "independent development" holds to the belief that out of the shadows of the forest, the presence of death, and other experiences that stir the superstitions of man, primitive magic was formed alike in different lands. From this magic came religion, which in time, as people progressed, became science. (See, Frazer, *The Golden Bough; Folk Lore of the Old Testament.*)

The second theory to explain the similarities in the religions and other cultures of different peoples holds that there has been a diffusion of religious, cultural ideas from a common centre or centres. This theory does not deny the possibility of "independent development", but insists that such development can not be proved. It claims that observed facts are much more easily explained on the theory of diffusion.

In support of this theory are historical evidences of

the diffusion of ideas, handicrafts, arts, pretty much over the whole earth. From early times the human race has travelled widely, often by sea. Intercommunication among widely separated countries has long been going on. From land to land the wisdom and the skill of man has been passed on, from land to land, from individual to individual. the accumulation of facts in favor of the diffusion view is large and most interesting. Its modern founder, Sir Edward Burnett Tyler, and his followers have produced a large and convincing literature dealing with the diffusion theory.

This theory agrees with the former that there is a gradual development of culture from primitive to more advanced peoples. It also admits that there are occasional difficulties in this as with every other theory. For example, the trilithons of Stonehenge of England, and those of Tongatabu in Oceania, though very similar, seem so far removed in distance as to have no relationship. Yet, the general intercourse of mankind, since early days, does not make it seem impossible that the idea of these ancient monuments had a common source.

In the field of religion, it has been well established that there has been a wide diffusion of ideas. Mohammedanism is a good example. From Arabia it has spread over Asia, parts of Europe and Africa, and into many islands of the sea. What has been done in this case, within easy historical times, may have and probably has been done with other religious ideas. (See, Sir G. Elliott Smith, *The Diffusion of Culture.*)

As a side light on this theory, it is interesting to note that the diffusionists are inclined to believe that the centre from which our present culture has diffused, was Egypt; and that the diffusion began about 4000 years before Christ. (See Sir G. Elliott Smith, *In The Beginning.*)

These two contending and opposite theories—the independent development and the diffusion theories—have followers of equal scholastic standing. As said, the independent development theory has been the fashionable one for some time. But, the history of scientific theories is that they rise and fall in popularity from time to time. The diffusion theory may soon be the one in best standing.

Latter-day Saints agree with both of these theories in part, and differ with them in part.

Revelation, the communication of man with God, lies fundamental in the Gospel structure. Every man born into the earth may receive knowledge and guidance through the omnipresent Holy Spirit. Should it be the will of the Lord, there could be no reason why two men, widely separated, and inaccessible one to the other, should not receive through revelation the same truths. To that extent, the doctrine of "independent development" can be accepted by Latter-day Saints.

Historically, however, the doctrine of diffusion seems to Latter-day Saints the more likely in explaining the religious and cultural similarities of the varying religions and races of men. Modern revelation, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, has given the clue. Adam, the first man was taught the Gospel, was baptized, received the Gift of the Holy Ghost, and was ordained to the Priesthood. While details are not given, the inference seems justified that the father of the human race received a knowledge of the fullness of the Gospel, and all its gifts. We know that he was ordained a Presiding High Priest.

"And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me. And then the angel spake, saying: This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth. Wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forever more. And in that day the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father and the Son, saying: I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning, henceforth and forever, that as thou hast fallen thou mayest be redeemed, and all mankind, even as many as will. . . . And thus the Gospel began to be preached, from the beginning, being declared by holy angels sent forth from the presence of God, and by his own voice, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost. And thus all things were confirmed unto Adam, by an holy ordinance, and the Gospel preached, and a decree sent forth, that it should be in the world, until the end thereof; and thus it was. . . . Now this same Priesthood which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also. . . . And our father Adam spake unto the Lord, and said: Why is it that men must repent and be baptized in water? And the Lord said unto Adam: Behold I have forgiven thee thy transgression in the Garden of Eden. . . . And it came to pass, when the Lord had spoken with Adam, our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord, and he was

caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water. And thus he was baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man. And he heard a voice out of heaven, saying: Thou art baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost. This is the record of the Father, and the Son, from henceforth and forever; and thou art after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity. Behold, thou art one in me, a son of God; and thus may all become my sons. Amen." (*Pearl of Great Price,* Moses, 5:6-9, 58, 59; 6:7, 53, 64-68.)

Adam taught the Gospel to his children and his children's children. Upon those who were worthy he conferred the Holy Priesthood. The Gospel with its principles and practices, its Priesthood and powers, were generally known among the people of Adam's long day.

Satan succeeded in those early days to turn many from righteous lives. These people lived sinfully. Yet, as they departed from association with the people of the Lord, they carried with them the knowledge of the Gospel. Such portions of it as seemed to fit their needs they retained, often warped beyond recognition. But, from the day of Adam, Gospel truth was diffused among the peoples of the earth.

The same thing happened after the Flood. Noah, a righteous man, knowing the Gospel and holding the Priesthood, taught the plan of salvation and the doctrines of the Gospel to his day and generation. Some listened and obeyed, more heard the message with unwilling hearts. Self-conquest precedes full acceptance of the Gospel. Nevertheless, even those who refused full obedience, took of the Gospel such truths as they desired, and without authority built their religions in imitation of the full truth.

This explains to Latter-day Saints the many striking similarities among the non-Christian and Christian religions. The early knowledge of the Gospel has spread over the earth, as men have so spread, and as inter-communication among nations has continued. The founders of the great world religions, and of less important ones, for that matter, have used to their liking, often in their desire to serve their own people, parts of the truths of the Gospel.

It may be that these founders were led by inspiration to assemble the truths of the Gospel for the use of their fellow men. Even a minor Gospel truth is a blessing, and

better than none. However, any such system can only be an approach to the covenant people which is the objective of the Gospel.

Sacred history leaves the conviction that in the increasing purpose of the Lord with respect to the human family, such peoples as have not been prepared for the Gospel have been given parts of it, as much as they could endure. Remember that the Higher Priesthood was taken from Israel in the wilderness, because of their unfitness for the higher privilege. This view seems well confirmed by the following passage from the Book of Mormon.

"For behold, the Lord does grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word, yea, in wisdom, all that he seeth fit that they should have." (Alma 29:8.)

The person who rails at Old Testament accuracy because the substance of the Ten Commandments is found in the code of Hammurabi, makes little impression upon Latter-day Saints who understand the spread of the knowledge of truth from Adam and Noah. The truths embodied in the Ten Commandments are part of the Gospel as taught to Adam. They were diffused among mankind. They were summarized and restated by the Lord to Moses, and preserved in that form for the benefit of Israel and all the world. Much foolish Bible fault-finding disappears in the light of modern revelation.

Such then is the answer to the query at the head of this writing.

(A series of articles dealing with Christian similarities in non-Christian religions will soon appear in the *Improvement Era.*)

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **What evidence have you that the same idea may come to people far removed from one another?**
2. **In your experience what truths or practices have spread from a common centre over the earth?**
3. **What doctrines of the ancient Gospel would seem most likely to be preserved in a day of Apostacy?**
4. **What is the real meaning of Alma 29:8?**
5. **How widely does revelation guide mankind?**
6. **Why was the Gospel with its ordinances and Priesthood given to Adam?**

III

The Gospel and Science

CHAPTER 21

WHAT IS THE ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH TOWARD SCIENCE?

THIS question, frequently asked, is readily answered. The Church, the custodian of the Gospel on earth, looks with full favor upon the attempts of men to search out the facts and laws of nature. It believes that men of science, seekers after truth, are often assisted by the spirit of the Lord in such researches, indeed, whenever they appeal to the Lord for help. It holds further that every scientific discovery may be incorporated into the Gospel, and that, therefore, there can be no conflict between true religion and correct science. The Church teaches that the laws of nature are but the immutable laws of the Creator of the universe.

This view has been held consistently by the Latter-day Saints from the organization of the Church. A revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1832, when science was yet in its swaddling clothes, declares, "And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom. Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the Gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand; of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries, and of kingdoms— And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning even by study and also by faith." (Doctrine and Covenants, Section 88, Verses 77, 78, 79, and 118.)

President Brigham Young frequently expressed support of the labors of men of science. For example, in one of his sermons he said: "I am not astonished that infidelity

prevails to a great extent among the inhabitants of the earth, for the religious teachers of the people advance many ideas and notions for truth which are in opposition to and contradict facts demonstrated by science, and which are generally understood—In these respects we differ from the Christian world, for our religion will not clash with or contradict the facts of science in any particular." (*Discourses of Brigham Young,* pp. 397, 398.)

President Joseph F. Smith made similar statements: "We believe in all truth, no matter to what subject it may refer. No sect or religious denomination in the world possesses a single principle of truth that we do not accept or that we will reject. We are willing to receive all truth, from whatever source it may come; for truth will stand, truth will endure. . . . . True science is that system of reasoning which brings to the fore the simple, plain truth." (*Gospel Doctrine,* pp. 1, 6.)

The common objective of the Gospel and science makes necessary the above attitude of the Church towards science. The objective of the Gospel is the possession of truth—all truth. Science has the same objective. However, science has been content, until recently, to study the material universe, and to leave its findings without reference to their possible effect upon human conduct. The Gospel on the other hand is primarily concerned with the manner in which truth is used in the spiritual field, that is, with human conduct. For example, science has discovered explosives of great power, and has shown how by their use rocks may be shattered or projectiles shot through the air, and has left this knowledge without comment as to its proper use. The Gospel teaches that this new power be not used in warfare, for wars are evil, but that it be used in the peaceful arts of man. The Gospel deals with right and wrong; science as yet has scarcely touched this field. The Gospel accepts God as the author of all knowledge; science gathers facts and tries to interpret them, without reference to a Supreme Being. In short, the Gospel is the more inclusive; present-day science, less inclusive. In the end, the two must become as one, for their common objective is truth.

Likewise, the Church holds the methods and means used by science to discover truth to be legitimate. Indeed, all instruments and means developed for the exploration of nature are welcomed. The Church claims the right to employ, in addition, such processes as are peculiarly fitted to its search for truth in the spiritual domain, which in turn may become tools in the advancement of a future science freed from its present material anchorage.

In this whole-hearted acceptance of science the Church makes, as must every sane thinker, two reservations:

First, the facts which are the building blocks of science must be honestly and accurately observed. In science, as in every human activity, dishonesty, carelessness, or aberrations of senses or mind may be encountered. The Church expects science to present accurately observed and fully corroborated facts. Loose methods of study are not acceptable. Indeed, the vast body of scientific facts has been so carefully garnered that it may in the main be accepted without question.

Second, the interpretations of observed facts must be distinctly labeled as inferences, and not confused with facts. The human mind properly attempts to explain or interpret the phenomena of nature, the facts of observation. A pencil looks bent in a glass of water. Why? asks the eager thinking mind. The sun rises in the East and sets in the West. Why? Does the sun move around the earth, or does the earth revolve upon its axis, to give the effect of day and night? Such explanations or interpretations, really inferences, often called hypotheses or theories, do not have the certain value of facts, for they usually change as new facts are brought forward. For example, with the knowledge at his command, Newton advanced the theory that light consists of particles; later, Young explained the phenomena of light as forms of wave motion; today, with increasing knowledge both of these theories are questioned, and another one is in the making. Meanwhile, the phenomena of light remain unchanged; they are the same today as in the time of Newton. Occasionally, but seldom, an inference such as the cause of night and day, becomes so well supported by discovered facts, that it assumes the dignity of a fact. Most inferences, however,

are in a condition of constant change, due to the continuing accumulation of new knowledge.

Dr. Albert Einstein, author of the relativity theory, speaks of scientists as men who seek solutions of the mysteries of the book of nature. (*The Evolution of Physics,* Einstein and Infeld, pp. 1, 5.) He insists that nature's mystery story is not only still unsolved but may not have a final solution. All that man can do is to collect facts, arrange them in an orderly fashion, and then to make them understandable by "creative thought"—that is, by the formulation of inferences, explanations, interpretations, hypotheses or theories, whatever the name may be.

Only in this particular do Latter-day Saints, in common with all thinkers, sound a warning to science. There must be a distinct segregation of facts and inferences in the utterances of scientific men. Readers of science should always keep this difference in mind. Even well-established inferences should not lose their inferential label. The facts discovered by an eminent investigator may be safely accepted; his explanations may be of doubtful value.

It is within recent months that Millikan and Compton, both Nobel prize winners, held widely differing explanations of the nature of "cosmic rays". And, within the year, also, the discovery of the skull of a prehistoric ape with a set of human-like teeth has overthrown the inferences that teeth are always true indications of the place of a fossil in the evolutionary scale. With respect to this latter matter, there was pathos in the remark of the famous anthropologist, Sir Arthur Keith, that "this discovery has destroyed the finer points we anthropologists depend on for drawing the line between anthropoid and man."

In summary: The Church supports and welcomes the growth of science. It asks only that the facts of science be as accurately determined as human powers permit, and that confusion between facts of science and inferences of science be earnestly avoided.

"The religion of the Latter-day Saints is not hostile to any truth, nor to scientific search for truth." "That which is demonstrated, we accept with joy," said the First Presidency in their Christmas greeting to the Saints. "But vain philosophy, human theory, and mere speculations of men

we do not accept, nor do we adopt anything contrary to divine revelation or to good common sense, but everything that tends to right conduct, that harmonizes with sound morality and increases faith in Deity, finds favor with us, no matter where it may be found. (Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, p. 48.)

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **What is meant by an attitude towards a subject?**
2. **What is your definition of science?**
3. **How has science benefitted mankind?**
4. **How has science injured mankind?**
5. **What would you call the experience Newton had when he conceived the law of gravitation?**
6. **As science progresses, what will be the effect upon the world?**

CHAPTER 22

IS IT WRONG TO DOUBT?

DOUBT usually means uncertainty. You doubt the presence of gold in the ore, though there are yellow flakes in it; or that the man is a thief, though stolen goods are found in his possession; or that a principle of the Gospel is correctly interpreted by the speaker. What you really mean is that the evidence in your possession is insufficient to convince you that there is gold in the ore, or that the man is a thief, or that the Gospel principle has been explained correctly. Doubt arises from lack of evidence.

Intelligent people can not long endure such doubt. It must be resolved. Proof must be secured of the presence of gold in the ore, or the dishonesty of the man, or the correctness of the doctrinal exposition. Consequently, we set about to remove doubt by gathering information and making tests concerning the subject in question. Doubt then becomes converted into an inquiry or investigation.

After proper inquiries, using all the powers at our command, the truth concerning the subject becomes known, or remains unknown to be unravelled perhaps at some future time. The weight of evidence is on one side or the other. Doubt, therefore, can be and should be only a temporary condition. Certainly, a question cannot forever be suspended between heaven and earth; it is either answered or unanswered. As the result of an inquiry appear, doubt must flee.

In other words, doubt, which ever is or should be a passing condition, must never itself be an end. Doubt as an objective of life is an intellectual as well as a spiritual offense. A lasting doubt implies an unwillingness on the part of the individual to seek the solution of his problem, or a fear to face the truth. Doubt should vanish as it appears, or as soon as proper inquiry can place it either with the known or the unknown facts of life; with the solvable or the unsolvable; with the knowable or the unknowable.

The strong man is not afraid to say, "I do not know"; the weak man simpers and answers, "I doubt". Doubt, unless transmuted into inquiry has no value or worth in the

world. Of itself it has never lifted a brick, driven a nail or turned a furrow. To take pride in being a doubter, without earnestly seeking to remove the doubt, is to reveal shallowness of thought and purpose.

Perhaps you are questioning the correctness of a Gospel principle. Call it doubt if you prefer. Proceed to take it out of the region of doubt by examination and practice. Soon it will be understood, or left with the many things not yet within the reach of man. But remember, failure to understand one principle does not vitiate other principles. Only when proved false, can one doctrine cast distrust upon other doctrines.

Faith is practically the opposite of doubt Faith rests securely upon "evidences" and "assurances' Note the definition by the Apostle Paul, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen." Faith knows, and goes forth courageously to use knowledge in the affairs of men. It declares itself the master of things; it lays mountains low, it lifts valleys, it promotes the welfare of man.

Doubt of the right kind, that is, honest questioning, leads to faith. Such doubt impels men to inquiry which always opens the door to truth. The scientist in his laboratory, the explorer in distant parts, the prayerful man upon his knees—these and all inquirers like them find truth. They learn that some things are known, others are not. They cease to doubt. They settle down with the knowledge they possess to make the forces of nature do their bidding, knowing well that they will be victorious; and that more knowledge will come to them, if sought, to yield new power.

On the other hand, a stagnant doubter, one content with himself, unwilling to make the effort, to pay the price of discovery, inevitably reaches unbelief and miry darkness. His doubts grow like poisonous mushrooms in the dim shadows of his mental and spiritual chambers. At last, blind like the mole in his burrow, he usually substitutes ridicule for reason, and indolence for labor. The humblest truth is worth the sum of all such doubts. He joins the unhappy army of doubters who, weakened by their doubts.

have at all periods of human history, allowed others, men of faith, to move the world into increasing light.

Joseph Smith is an excellent example of proper doubt. The ministers of his day were contending for the membership of the boy. He went to God for help, received it; and doubt disappeared. From that day on doubt did not reappear. His doubt was lost in inquiry, and he won the desired knowledge. So may every man do.

No! Doubt is not wrong unless it becomes an end of life. It rises to high dignity when it merges with an active search for and practice of truth.

The unknown universe, material, mental, spiritual, is greater than the known. If we seek we shall forever add knowledge to knowledge. That which seems dark today, will be crystal clear tomorrow. Eternal progress means the unending elucidation of things not known or understood today.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **Distinguish between doubt and unbelief**
2. **What is the difference between doubt and questioning?**
3. **Why does doubt precede sound knowledge?**
4. **How may man ever grow in knowledge?**
5. **Relate some of the doubts you have met in your life? How were they resolved? How may they be resolved?**
6. **What doubts trouble the youth of your circle? How would you meet them?**

CHAPTER 23

HOW OLD IS THE EARTH?

THIS is an ancient question which has occasioned much controversy. There are at least three prevailing answers among faithful Bible-believing Latter-day Saints. The fact appears to be that no man knows the age of the earth.

The first group believe that the earth was created in six days of twenty-four hours each. That is, the earth was six days old at the coming of Adam. This view is based upon the literal acceptance of the story of creation as given in King James' translation of Genesis. (Gen., Chapter 1; Exodus 20:11.) According to this belief there was a succession of sudden or catastrophic creative events during this short period of time which led to the formation of the earth. The catastrophists contend that the Lord is able through His divine power, if He so desires, to form an earth or many earths in short moments of time. They also quote the words of Moses, as revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, which follow closely the wording of King James' translation. (*Pearl of Great Price,* Moses, 2:1-31.)

The second group hold that each day of creation was really one thousand years, and that the earth therefore was six thousand years old at the coming of Adam. Those who uphold this view quote as their support the statement of the Apostle Peter, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Peter, 3:8.) In defense of this view the statement made by Abraham is also quoted: "The Lord said unto me, by the Urim and Thummim, that Kolob was after the manner of the Lord, according to its times and seasons in the revolutions thereof; that one revolution was a day unto the Lord, after his manner of reckoning, it being one thousand years according to the time appointed unto that whereon thou standest. This is the reckoning of the Lord's time according to the reckoning of Kolob. (*Pearl of Great Price,* Abraham, 3:4.)

The third group believe that the creation of the earth extended over immensely long periods of time, not yet correctly established by revelation or by man's scientific

advance, and that the earth therefore is very old. In support of this view they marshal several arguments:

First. It is admitted that the Lord has power to accomplish His work in His own way and time. "But nature and scripture both teach us that it has pleased the Lord to work gradually. His purpose was to fill the earth with inhabitants, and yet only a single pair was created. . . . It is His will that the whole earth shall be filled with knowledge of Himself; but the diffusion of the knowledge has been left to gradual preaching and human instrumentality. So in nature, trees, animals, and men have small beginnings, and require time to attain to perfection." (A. McCaul, "The Mosaic Record of Creation," p. 213 in *Aids to Faith.*)

Second. The word translated "day" in Genesis really means, in the original, an age or undefined period of time, and is so rendered in several translations of the Bible. Further, the first three "days" could not have been days such as we have, for the sun and the moon had not yet been placed in the firmament. (Genesis, 1:5-19.) Moreover, the word "day" is used frequently throughout the Bible in a general sense, as "the day of the Lord," "the day of vengeance," "the night is far spent, the day is at hand."

Third. Scripture revealed in modern days to the Prophet Joseph Smith indicates that the word "day" should be understood to mean periods of time, for in the Abrahamic record of creation, each creative act is followed by the statement "This was the first or the beginning of that which they called night and day," "and this was the second time that they called night and day," and so on until "and they numbered the sixth time." (*Pearl of Great Price,* Abraham, Chapter 4.) Then, "And the Gods concluded upon the seventh time." (Ibid, 5:3.)

Fourth. Genesis opens with the phrase "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." It is quite agreed by students that the word "beginning" is indefinite in its significance and may mean previous time or even previous eternity, according to subject—as in John's gospel "Before the world was." (John 17:5.) This is placed by the side of Alma's words "All is as one day with God and time only is measured unto men," (Alma,

40:8) as indicating that our measurement of time, with its short days and hours came only with man.

Fifth. The slow processes of nature, as known to man, must long have been in operation to lift the mountains from lake and sea bottoms, and to carve out the valleys. All human experience points to the need of periods of time far beyond six thousand years, to fashion the earth as it appears today, or as it seems to have been throughout recorded history.

Sixth. Recent discoveries in the field of radio-activity have furnished a "time-clock" which compels the belief that the earth is very old, far beyond the former, accepted limits.

Those who upon the above and other views hold that the earth is very old, have attempted to estimate the age of the earth in years. The method is always based on a common principle. The rate at which some process is going on at the present day is measured as accurately as possible, and the average change produced in say one year, is compared with the total effect produced by that process during the interval that has elapsed since its commencement. (See Arthur Holmes, *The Age of the Earth,* p. 29.)

The earliest method of estimating geological time was to discover the maximum thickness of the stratified formations in the earth's crust and to determine the amount of sediment carried annually into the ocean. Geological study indicates that the thickness of the earth's stratified formations is at least 360,000 feet (Holmes, p. 79), and that the annual discharge of sediments into the ocean is such as to require millions of years for the deposition of the strata in question. It is admitted that this method can indicate only long periods of time, and not definite measurements in years.

A somewhat more satisfactory method deals with the salt in ocean water. It is assumed that the first ocean water was fresh. The sodium chloride or salt that it now contains has been dissolved from the sediments brought down into the ocean by the rivers. The water has been evaporated and condensed into rain over and over again, but the salt which is not volatile has remained to increase the saltiness of the ocean. Estimates have been made of

the annual discharge in the rivers of earth, their load of materials, and the probable amount of salt in the water and the sediments. Similar estimates have been made of the amount of salt in the ocean. Then by simply dividing the annual addition of salt into the total amount of salt in the oceans, the number of years of the accumulation is obtained. By this method, acknowledged to be subject to many corrections, salt has been added to the oceans for a period of about 330 million years. According to this calculation, the earth must be at least that old.

The discovery of radioactivity and the element radium, furnished an unexpectedly accurate geological hour-glass that has been used in estimating the age of the earth.

The element uranium is radioactive. That is, it emits spontaneously, continuously, and uniformly various radiations. As it does so it is degraded, passing from one form to another, including radium, until the final residue is lead. That is, there is a life-limit to uranium, radium, and several other elements. Methods have been developed by which the rate of this degradation may be measured accurately. The amount of lead, or radium in association with uranium will then point to the length of time since the uranium was formed.

It has been found that the age of uranium, determined as above suggested, is lowest in the more recent rocks and highest in the oldest rocks. This is a confirmation of much previous geological work on the relative ages of rock deposits. The age of the oldest rock approaches, by this method, 2,000 million years. The earth must then, by this form of study, be at least that old.

It is a curious fact that studies by modern methods of the age of the solar system have yielded similar results, that is, about 2,000 million years. It is a most interesting chapter in modern exploration. (See, *The Age of the Earth,* Arthur Holmes, 1937; also F. J. Pack, *Science and Belief in God.*) Those who hold to the long-time age of the earth point out that present scientific data indicate "an epoch of creation," 2,000 million years ago.

. . . . . .

Every person must decide for himself, on the basis of

the evidence produced, which of these three opinions as to the age of the earth, before Adam, seems most reasonable to him, whether (1) six days, or (2) six thousand years, or (3) many millions of years. Clearly it does not matter to one's daily welfare or salvation which view he adopts, except that every Latter-day Saint must seek and cherish truth above all else.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **How does science arrive at its facts?**
2. **How does science arrive at its inferences?**
3. **Why do scientific inferences change?**
4. **What is the meaning of the Book of Mormon statement that "time is measured only to man"?**
5. **What observations have you made in your travels as to the age of the earth?**
6. **What is your own position relative to the age of the Earth? Explain.**

HOW DID THE EARTH COME INTO BEING?

CHAPTER 24

THE earth came into being by the will and power of God. Upon that proposition the accepted scriptures of the Church and their authoritative interpretations agree. Chance is ruled out. Latter-day Saints believe that the earth and the heavens and the manifold operations within the universe are products of intelligent action, of the mind of God. There is nothing haphazard about the universe in which we live. (See Genesis 1:1; Moses 2:1; Abraham 4:1; Doc. and Cov. 93:9.)

This doctrine is set forth in eloquent words in modern revelation.

> And it came to pass, as the voice was still speaking, Moses cast his eyes and beheld the earth, yea, even all of it; and there was not a particle of it which he did not behold, discerning it by the Spirit of God.
>
> And he beheld also the inhabitants thereof and there was not a soul which he beheld not; and he discerned them by the Spirit of God; and their numbers were great, even numberless as the sand upon the sea shore.
>
> And he beheld many lands; and each land was called earth, and there were inhabitants on the face thereof.
>
> And it came to pass that Moses called upon God, saying: Tell me, I pray thee, why these things are so, and by what thou madest them?
>
> And behold, the glory of the Lord was upon Moses, so that Moses stood in the presence of God, and talked with him face to face. And the Lord God said unto Moses: For mine own purpose have I made these things. Here is wisdom and it remaineth in me.
>
> And by the word of my power, have I created them, which is mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth.
>
> And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten.
>
> And the first man of all men have I called Adam, which is many.
>
> But only an account of this earth, and the inhabitants thereof, give I unto you. For behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man; but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them. (Moses 1:27-35.)

Further, Latter-day Saints believe that the Lord formed or organized the earth from existing universal materials. That it is impossible to create something from nothing is a spiritual as well as a scientific axiom. It is an

established doctrine of the Church that the ultimate elements which constitute the universe are eternal, indestructible, everlasting. Whether these ultimate realities be, in the language of present-day science, molecules, atoms, electrons, or pure energy is of little concern. Whatever is the ultimate reality is eternal. Matter as we know it, and which forms the earth, is made from eternal elements. In that sense the formation of the earth was an organization rather than a creation. (See Doctrine and Covenants, 93: 33; Moses 1:38.)

Just what forces were brought into operation, or what process was used, to organize the "elements" into an earth is not known. Latter-day Saints are inclined to hold that forces about us, known in part through common human experience, especially in the field of physical science, were employed in the formation of the earth. The progress of science may yet shed much light on the origin of the earth.

During human history numerous mystical and mythical ideas have been advanced concerning the origin of the earth. These may be ignored. During the course of science, three main theories have been set up to explain how the earth came into being.

First came the nebular hypothesis, elaborated upon the suggestions of others by the famous French mathematician and physicist, Laplace, nearly one hundred and fifty years ago. This assumes that the sun was formed from the condensation of a nebula, a gaseous body. As the gaseous rotating sun contracted, gaseous rings would be thrown off from the sun, much as drops of water fly off a grindstone. Each such ring would become a planet revolving around the sun. One such ring of gas after gradual cooling and contraction became the earth. This hypothesis was universally acclaimed; those who would not accept it were long looked upon as "unscientific." Yet, the relentless growth of knowledge seemed to show the nebular hypothesis erroneous, and now it has long been discarded. (See *Stars and Planets,* D. H. Menzel.)

The planetesimal theory followed. This was proposed by the eminent geologists, Chamberlain and Moulton of the University of Chicago. A star might have come so near the sun as to cause tremendous gravitational pulls

upon each other, causing tidal waves, as it were, and erupting material into space. This material, as meteors or cosmic dust, was built up into planets such as the earth. (See *The Origin of the Earth,* T. C. Chamberlain.)

This theory was modified, as its weaknesses were discovered, notably by Sir James Jeans, of Cambridge University, England. He retains the thought of the tidal effect of the sun and a star in immediate proximity but believes that large masses, the size of the planets, were torn out of the sun. The earth, then, is an original part of the sun, thrown out through the gravitational pull of a star that wandered too near the sun. This theory seems, for the present, to have the right-of-way. (See *The Universe Around Us,* James Jeans.)

Scrutiny of the tidal theory has led many investigators to reject it and to set up substitutions. R. A. Lyttleton, for example, has suggested that if the sun were a double star at the time the wandering star came too near, many of the difficulties of the tidal theory might be avoided. There is also the theory, proposed by Rev. Georges Lemaitre, that some billions of years ago all universal matter was in the form of a gigantic radioactive atom. For some unexplained reason this atom burst, scattering suns, stars, planets, satellites, and nebulae throughout the universe.

By slow, often painful progress, usually by the method of trial and error, science reaches its haven of truth. As to the origin of the earth, man knows only that it was organized by divine intelligence and power from existing eternal materials. Speculations about the method or process, however honestly offered, or by what eminent authority, must not be taken too seriously.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. **What is really meant when we say that the Lord created the earth?**
2. **What tools do divine beings use in accomplishing their work?**
3. **What evidences have we of divine power in the forming of the earth?**
4. **What natural forces seem to have done most to shape the earth as it is today?**
5. **Which of the theories of the earth's formation appeals to you most? Why?**
6. **What do we mean when we say that the universe is eternal?**

CHAPTER 25

WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF LIFE ON EARTH?

THIS question has occupied the best minds since the beginning of human history. The answer has not yet been found in the halls of science.

From the earliest time, many men of sound thought have believed in the spontaneous generation of life. Aristotle (384-322 B. C.), for example, taught that decaying matter, under the influence of moisture and the sun's heat, will produce living things. He even went so far as to teach that the higher forms of life were spontaneously generated. St. Augustine (354-430 A. D.), made the doctrine one of the church. His reasoning was simple: As the Lord could make wine from water, so life could be made from the soil and water and air of earth. In his opinion, spontaneous generation was but a manifestation of the will of God. Even such minds as that of Newton (1643-1727) could see no inconsistency in the doctrine. Up to the middle of the last century, the doctrine was very generally accepted.

However, as the more exact methods of science were developed, doubt was cast upon the theory. For example, van Helmont, great scientist as he was, had explained that dirty linen, mixed with grain, would, in 21 days, produce mice. Subjected to scientific scrutiny, the folly of this formula was revealed.

Finally came Louis Pasteur, who in the middle of the last century by a series of brilliant experiments laid low the doctrine of spontaneous generation. It was, however, only after a terrific battle with his contemporaries that he set up the law that only life can beget life. For a number of decades now, the world has rested secure in the correctness of his conclusion.

Recently, however, it has been suggested that while, under the conditions now prevailing on earth, spontaneous generation of life is impossible, there may have been times, under different conditions, when living organisms might have been produced from lifeless matter. The reasoning is somewhat as follows: As the molten earth cooled, conditions were such as to form large quantities of the substance

cyanogen, composed of carbon and nitrogen, essential constituents of living tissue. As the new-born atmosphere gradually changed to its present conditions, complex chemical compounds were formed from the cyanogen, which, as the earth cooled, increased in complexity, approached the nature of living tissue, and at last acquired the properties that characterize life. From these simple units of life, the theory holds, have developed the forms of life now known to man. It is added that life can not be so formed today, for conditions are so different. It requires an abnormal faith in science to accept this theory. (See Oparin, *The Origin of Life,* 1938.)

The question has been raised with respect to the viruses, which are so small as to pass through filters: Do they perpetuate life? Existing evidence favors the belief that they also obey the law that life begets life.

If life was not spontaneously generated on earth, if life is necessary to beget life, the first life on earth must have come from some point outside of the earth. So reasoned many men of unimpeachable standing in the world of sound thinking. That raised two questions at once: Does life exist beyond the earth? And if life exists beyond the earth how can it reach the earth?

Men of the highest standing have believed that the earth is not the only home of living beings—such men as von Liebig, von Helmholtz, and Lord Kelvin.

The existence of life in space is exceedingly difficult to prove by the methods of science for us who live on earth. An attempt was made by the famous bacteriologist, Charles B. Lippman, to discover whether meteorites, which fall from the sky, contain living organisms. Every precaution against error was taken. The best-known technique was followed. Lippman came to the conclusion after this careful work that live bacteria and their spores were found in the interior of the rocky meteorites studied by him. Many objections were offered against these findings. The bacteria he found were identical with some known on earth; the heat generated by the falling body would kill the germs —and so on. The controversy still goes on.

Other workers, assuming that life does exist beyond the earth, undertook to study the possible means by which

living germs could be carried through space to the earth. The scientist, Richter, called attention to the fact that it has been shown that germs of life may remain dormant for long periods of time, may exist without food or water, yet may be revivified, as soon as the conditions necessary for active life are available. The eminent physicist, von Helmholtz, followed this up with the proposition that meteorites in their descent through the air are heated only on the surface. Carbon, easily combustible, is found unchanged inside of meteorites—hence life germs could survive any heat that might be generated.

In the progress of science it had been found that light, passing through space, exerts a pressure on the objects it encounters. This principle was seized upon to explain how life might have been brought from other heavenly bodies to the earth. The world-famous physicist, Arrhenius, suggested that microscopic germs of life might be carried by atmospheric currents and electrical disturbances into space and, under the pressure of light, be carried within reach of other bodies in space. Arrhenius even subjected the hypothesis to mathematical treatment, and showed that such particles, leaving the earth, would pass beyond the limits of our planetary system in fourteen months, and in 9000 years would reach the nearest star, *Alpha Centauri*. He also showed that the heat attendant upon such a journey would not exceed 100°, and that only for a short time. (See Arrhenius, *Worlds in the Making*, 1908.) A barrage of objections was pointed upon this hypothesis. The chief weakness, it was claimed, was that the ultraviolet light and cosmic rays of space, not softened by the atmosphere, would destroy, quickly, any life germs floating in space. There the matter stands today.

Now, from the very beginning of thinking on the subject of the origin of life on earth, a group of powerful thinkers have insisted that life is one of the eternal realities of the universe, uncreated, eternal, as eternal as any other of the ultimate elements of the universe. One school of Greek thought held that the universe, the solar system, and the earth itself were living organisms.

The doctrine of the eternity of life implies that "things" become alive when the life force enters them.

Thus came the doctrine of vitalism, or vital force, which has met such fierce opposition from the school of materialism. Under this doctrine all living things are dual in their composition; they are of matter and of life. Those who so believe declare that either life is spontaneously generated, or it is of eternal existence. The majority of them also are believers in God, and inclined to hold that things are made alive by His power, through means not understood by man, or perhaps beyond his understanding.

The corollary of the doctrine that life eternal is the doctrine of pre-existence. The essential part of any living being is its life. If life is eternal then the living thing is eternal also. Driven by such logic, schools of thought, from the Greeks to our own day, have harbored more or less completely the doctrine of pre-existence.

As far as the data of science or the speculations of philosophers go, no light is shed upon the origin of life on earth.

The teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith leave the conviction that life is eternal, or at least that it had a pre-existent life, not of spontaneous origin on earth. For example:

> . . . These are the generations of the heaven and of the earth, when they were created, in the day that I, the Lord God, made the heaven and the earth;
>
> And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew. For I, the Lord God, created all things, of which I have spoken, spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth. . . . And I, the Lord God, had created all the children of men; and not yet a man to till the ground; for in heaven created I them; and there was not yet flesh upon the earth, neither in the water, neither in the air;
>
> . . . All things were before created; but spiritually were they created and made according to my word. (*Pearl of Great Price, Moses* 3:4, 5, 7; see also *Abraham* 5:2-5.)

One may read into these sayings that individuality itself is eternal. With respect to man, that is a well-settled doctrine. "Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be." (*Doctrine and Covenants* 93:29.) This doctrine is confirmed in the Book of Abraham:

Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones;

And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born.

And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;

And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever. (*Abraham* 3:22-26.)

From the organization of the Church to the present day, the pre-existence of man has been taught as a necessary element in the plan of salvation.

Whether the references in sacred writ concerning the pre-existence of all life, plant and animal, justify the belief that individuality is preserved even in the lower orders of creation, must remain, until further light is obtained, a matter of personal opinion. The wording of the above quotations from the Book of Moses seem to imply the pre-existence of individual life everywhere. Certainly, the earth on which we live is an imperishable, living organism:

And again, verily I say unto you, the earth abideth the law of a celestial kingdom, for it filleth the measure of its creation, and transgresseth not the law—

Wherefore, it shall be sanctified; yea, notwithstanding it shall die, it shall be quickened again, and shall abide the power by which it is quickened, and the righteous shall inherit it. (*Doctrine and Covenants* 88:25, 26.)

That man, as perhaps all creation, is a dual being, is an equally certain doctrine. Man is composed of the eternal spirit residing in a mortal body. The Gospel centers upon the conversion of a perishable into an imperishable body to be possessed by the everlasting spirit. "The spirit and the body are the soul of man." (*Doctrine and Covenants* 88:15.)

Science stands at present helpless before the mystery of the origin of life on earth. It offers guesses which have no precedence over theological inferences. Through revelation we know that life existed before the earth was, and that "man was in the beginning with God." Life was placed upon earth by God, through His power. That doctrine satisfies the inmost need of man. In time, that doctrine will be confirmed by the accumulation of human knowledge. The method by which life was brought upon earth is not known by anyone.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. What is life?
2. What is meant by the doctrine that life is eternal?
3. How is death the portal to eternal life?
4. Why does the eternal, living spirit need a body for ultimate joy?
5. What are your objections to the old doctrine of spontaneous generation of life?
6. How do you interpret the statement that "the earth abideth the law of a celestial kingdom"?

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